

# Torrance Tribune

The Weekly Newspaper of Torrance

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## Los Hermanos' Gifts Help Emergency Patients Stay Warm



A group of young boys dedicated to giving back to their community presented a gift to the Emergency Department (E.D.) to bring patients comfort during their visit to Torrance Memorial. Representatives from the local service organization Los Hermanos made and delivered more than 24 fleece blankets. The colorful and decorative blankets help keep patients warm during their visit and also give them something to take home with them after their stay. The boys have donated nearly 100 blankets to the E.D. in the last three years. Los Hermanos is a non-profit organization made up of high school-aged boys who live on the Peninsula. The group participates in numerous community service projects throughout the year. Photo courtesy of Torrance Medical Center.

## Japanese Leaders Visit Council on Anniversary of Exchange Program

By Dylan Little

During Tuesday night's Torrance City Council meeting, City leaders hosted a special delegation of visitors from Torrance's sister city Kashiwa, Japan--five members of Kashiwa's City Assembly. The Japanese politicians were visiting as part of the 40th anniversary of the two cities' exchange program.

Kashiwa Assembly members Takafumi Furukawa, Shoichi Ishii, Shogo Murata, Tadahiro Sukegawa and Norihito Tsumuraya were only in town for one day, but kept a busy schedule. They had lunch with elementary school students, visited the police station where they took a "photo from jail" and met with the Council to talk about issues that affect both cities. Mayor Frank Scotto said the talks showed how similar Kashiwa and Torrance are despite the ocean between them.

"We talked about many different things that are very similar between the two cities. We had a great exchange of ideas and thoughts," said Scotto. "Believe it or not, people might be surprised to hear me say that the cities are very similar and we have similar issues we are involved in. It's very interesting to hear that people who are across the world are having the same problems we are."

The visit was part of a celebration of the two cities' sister city relationship. Later this year, 25 adults from Torrance will be visiting Kashiwa in addition to eight students who typically visit that city as part of the cultural exchange program that sends students, adult chaperones and English teachers to Japan. Torrance Sister City Association President Werner Willoughby said that the partnership has fostered friendship and understanding between the two communities and that both cities are looking forward to sending outstanding student ambassadors to their respective sister city. "We are in the process of celebrating 40 years of a cultural partnership with the city of Kashiwa," said Willoughby.

"The goals of cultural exchange, friendship and understanding were formally established in 1973. Both Torrance and Kashiwa are currently in the process of selecting the very best eight students for this summer's exchange program."

Both the Council and the Kashiwa visitors expressed their dedication to their cultural partnership. The Kashiwa Assembly members said they hoped to strengthen the relationship between the two cities in the future and Scotto mentioned the impact the sister city program has had on both cities. "Many lives have been touched over the years by our shared

relationship," said Scotto.

The Council also recognized two hardworking community groups--the Friends of the Torrance Library, which was donating \$48,394 dollars for library activities, and the Centennial Committee, which is filing its final report with the Council. A portion of the Friends' donation will help the fund some of the Library Century of Service activities, including a video contest, an end-of-summer family carnival and an event for library officials. The remainder will go towards funding the summer reading program and

**See Council, page 14**

## Weekend Forecast

**Friday**  
Showers  
58°/46°



**Saturday**  
Sunny  
57°/47°



**Sunday**  
Sunny  
59°/48°



## School District Addresses the Outcome of Prop 30

By Dylan Little

The Torrance School Board hosted a budget workshop at J.H. Hull Middle School last week to discuss the impact of Prop 30, the ramifications of Governor Jerry Brown's new funding formula and consider program restorations made possible with additional funding from Prop 30. While many citizens see the passage of Prop 30 as a massive injection of funds to California schools, in reality it merely maintains flat funding for this year and a small increase in per-pupil funding for the next school year. Education funding won't return to the 2008 level until 2021, assuming no unforeseen economic factors come into play for the next eight years. Deputy Superintendent Donald Stabler said that there is a \$50 million dollar gap in Torrance Unified School District's (TUSD) budget that won't be fully rectified until 2021. "Roughly, the cuts total \$50 million," said Stabler. "Our budget in 2006-2007 was roughly \$200 million.

Now it's about \$150 million."

While Prop 30 keeps TUSD out of deficit spending this school year, the District will face a growing deficit in each of the following years. Luckily, as Stabler pointed out, TUSD has a well-stocked reserve for economic uncertainty that will be enough to ride out deficits at least until 2015. Stabler credited the Board, Superintendent George Mannon and staff for helping the District maintain a reserve. "Because of our employees and Dr. Mannon, we've been able to keep significant reserves and because of their hard work we will continue to have those reserves in 2015-2016," said Stabler.

Another critical factor in education funding is the Governor's new education funding plan, called Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), that will change the rules on how the State distributes funding to school districts. The new method would allow districts more freedom to fund

**See School Board, page 4**

# People



Happy 18th Birthday

### HAPPY 18<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

Norma, no matter how old you are, you will always be our little girl made of sugar, spice and everything nice. May your birthday bring as much happiness to you as you have given to others. And may beauty and happiness surround you always.

### CONGRATULATIONS

**Ryley Goldsworthy and Corinne Hemmersbach**, both Torrance residents, earned dean's list status for the recently ended Fall 2012 term at Washington and Lee students University. •

# Calendar

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

• "The Legend of Hagoromo," 3 p.m., James R. Armstrong Theatre, 3330 Civic Center Drive. For information call (310) 532-1929 or email mensore@earthlink.net.

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

• South High Band Boosters 7<sup>th</sup> Annual "Sweet Jazz Night", 6:30 p.m., South High Cafeteria, 4801 Pacific Coast Hwy.

• TUSD's 14th Annual Dance Collaboration Effort, 7 p.m. (also Feb. 15), James Armstrong Theatre, 3330 Civic Center Drive. For information call (310) 781-7171.

• The California Retired Teachers Association (CaRTA) Division 46 meeting, 11:30 a.m., Hometown Buffet, 3520 W. Carson Street.

### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 14

• South Bay Republican Women Federated Monthly Luncheon Meeting, 11:00a.m., DoubleTree Hotel, 21333 Hawthorne Blvd.

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

• Baskets Full of Quilts and More, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (also Feb 17), Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Drive.

• Free Workshop: "Finding Income in Today's Zero Interest Rate Environment", 9-11 a.m., Torrance Memorial Medical Center, 3330 Lomita Blvd. For information call (310) 517-4728.

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

• Erth's Dinosaur Petting Zoo, 2 p.m., James Armstrong Theatre, 3330 Civic Center Drive. For information call (310) 781-7171.

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

• "Game Night", 6- 9 p.m., The Torrance Woman's Club, 1422 Engracia Ave. For information call (310) 533-9116.

### ONGOING

• Story Time, Sundays, 2-2:30 p.m., Poppies Bookstore, 3614 PCH. For information call (310) 373-5553.

• Downtown Torrance Marketplace, 3 p.m.-8 p.m., on El Prado Street, from Sartori to the Buffalo Fire Department.

• Senior Days (age 50 or older) for February, Mon- Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Palos Verdes Bowl, 24600 Crenshaw Blvd. For information call (310) 326-5120. •

# Business Briefs

### CONGRESSWOMAN WATERS SPEAKS OUT IN HONOR OF FRED KOREMATSU DAY



Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43) spoke out against the U.S. internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II at an event marking the third annual "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution," a day which honors Korematsu who challenged the government's incarceration camps for Japanese-Americans. The event was held on Saturday, Jan. 26 at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library in Torrance. Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution is the first day in United States History named after an Asian American. The day was established under a bill signed into law on Sept. 23, 2010, and is observed on January 30th on Mr. Korematsu's birthday. During the event, Congresswoman Waters presented a certificate to Mr. Korematsu's daughter, Karen who served as the keynote speaker.

### LIBRARY CONTINUES CELEBRATION WITH CENTENNIAL LIBRARY CARD

In honor of the Torrance Public Library's Centennial Celebration, the Library will be hosting a series of events to highlight the 100 years of service the Library has provided to the community. In addition to events and

programs, the Library will launch a new Centennial Library Card. The card features a new logo and a handy keychain card. If you've never had a Library card before, the card is free. If you want to replace your current card with the new one, the cost is just \$5. The Centennial Library Cards are available now at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library - 3301 Torrance Blvd., Torrance.

### HEALTH, WELLNESS FACILITY CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

SunLiving Health & Wellness celebrated a festive grand opening on Friday, January 25, which featured a formal Chamber of Commerce ribbon-cutting ceremony as well as a lion dance. It was a proud day for Dr. Reuben Chen, MD whose lifelong ambition was to open a facility which focused on health and wellness. Dr. Chen is board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and specializes in pain management, acupuncture and prolotherapy. SunLiving's Torrance location



is the first retail store in the United States and will have customized programs for medical weight loss, fitness and nutrition. SunLiving is located at 22150 Hawthorne Blvd. in Torrance, www.sunlivinghealth.com, 310-370-0008. Photo by Charlene Nishimura.

See Business Briefs, page 4

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\*(Photo and editorial must be provided by Friday, Feb. 8) Valentine's message to be published in our Feb. 14 issue.

#### Message:

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## Police Briefs

### OFFICER- INVOLVED SHOOTING DR# 130007060

On Sunday, Feb. 3, at approximately 6:15 a.m., Torrance Police Department patrol officers responded to a burglary alarm at Morgan's Jewelers located at 22200 Hawthorne Blvd, in the City of Torrance. Upon arrival, officers observed forced entry into the business, located a suspect and an officer involved shooting occurred. The suspect was shot and transported

to a local hospital where he was treated for his non-life threatening injury. The suspect has been released from the hospital and transported back to the Torrance Police Department for processing. No officers sustained any injuries during the incident. This incident is being investigated under the command and direction of Captain Bernard Anderson of the Special Operations Bureau and the assistance of the Los Angeles County District Attorneys Office. •

## Police Reports

The crimes listed are crimes where a report was taken by law enforcement agency and submitted for investigation. The outcome of the investigation or any criminal court proceeding are not considered when reporting crimes. The crimes are listed as follows: arson, simple assault, aggravated assault-weapon, auto theft, auto burglary, commercial burglary, residential burglary, homicide, strong-arm robbery, robbery with a weapon, theft and vandalism. The City of Torrance, or its employees or agents, shall assume no liability for: 1. Any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided regardless of how caused; or 2. Any decision made or action taken or not taken by reader in reliance upon any information or data furnished hereunder.

### JANUARY 26

**Burglary-Auto:** 2100 BLOCK PLAZA DEL AMO Suspect(s) smashes window for entry and takes property/GPS, backpack.

**Burglary-Auto:** 2600 BLOCK APPLE AVE Suspect(s) removes lock for entry and takes property/gift cards, ID, tablet, ash tray, charger, third row seat.

**Auto Theft-All:** 4200 BLOCK PACIFIC COAST HWY Stolen vehicle: '89 Mazda P/U.

**Burglary Residential:** 18100 BLOCK ERMANITA AVE Suspect(s) bends/ remove window screen, breaks window near latch/ no entry, no loss.

**Vandalism:** 2500 BLOCK BORDER AVE Suspect(s) breaks/ damages mirrors on victim's vehicle.

**Burglary-Auto:** 2500 BLOCK APPLE AVE Suspect(s) enters unlocked vehicle, ransacks and takes property/briefcase.

### JANUARY 25

**Burglary-Auto:** 23100 BLOCK MADISON ST Suspect(s) smashes window for entry and takes property/canvas bag, notary supplies.

**Battery-Simple:** 700 BLOCK SARTORI AVE Suspect punches victim in the head and face repeatedly.

**Burglary-Auto:** 2100 BLOCK PLAZA DEL AMO Suspect(s) smashes window for entry and takes property/tote bag, paperwork.

**Robbery Weapon:** 3400 BLOCK ARTESIA BLVD Suspect brandishes a knife and orders victim to empty his pockets/no loss.

**Burglary-Auto:** 200 BLOCK VIA PASQUAL Suspect(s) enters vehicle by unknown means, ransacks and takes property/tablets.

### JANUARY 24

**Vandalism:** 3700 BLOCK 227TH ST Suspect(s) pours unknown powder on victim's vehicle's engine and pours sugar in its gas tank.

**Burglary-Auto:** 900 BLOCK VAN NESS AVE Suspect(s) enters unlocked vehicle and takes property/purse, gym bag.

**Burglary-Auto:** 300 BLOCK VIA PASQUAL Suspect(s) enters two unlocked vehicles, ransacks and takes property/iPod, cash.

**Burglary-Auto:** 100 BLOCK VIA LA

CIRCULA Suspect(s) enters unlocked vehicle, ransacks and takes property/cell phone.

**Burglary-Residential:** 3500 BLOCK WHITE CT Suspect(s) enters unlocked vehicle and takes property/cell phones, iPod, cash.

**Theft:** 2300 BLOCK JEFFERSON ST Suspect(s) takes property from unsecured storage locker/golf bags, golf clubs, skateboard.

**Theft:** HAWTHORNE BLVD & ARTESIA BLVD Suspect asks to use victim's property and flees with same/cell phone.

**Burglary-Residential:** 4100 BLOCK 176TH ST Suspect(s) kicks in door for entry/no loss.

**Burglary-Auto:** 3900 BLOCK CATHANN ST Suspect(s) enters vehicle by unknown means and takes property/tools, vacuum pump.

**Vandalism:** 3400 BLOCK TORRANCE BLVD Suspect(s) graffiti's exterior walls of location.

**Theft:** 4600 BLOCK TORRANCE BLVD Suspect(s) smashes padlock to enter trailer/ no loss.

**Auto Theft-All:** 3500 BLOCK DEL AMO BLVD Stolen vehicle: '04 Toyota Sequoia.

### JANUARY 23

**Burglary-Auto:** 4200 BLOCK REDONDO BEACH BLVD Suspect(s) smashes window for entry and takes property/purse, sunglasses.

**Burglary-Auto:** 23200 BLOCK WESTERN AVE Suspect(s) enters vehicle via unsecured window and takes property/paperwork, boots, jacket.

**Theft:** 2400 BLOCK CARSON ST Suspect(s) takes property from under victim's vehicle's hood/car battery.

**Auto Theft-All:** 23000 BLOCK FONTHILL AVE Stolen vehicle: '97 Honda Civic.

**Burglary-Residential:** 22500 BLOCK NADINE CIR Suspect(s) uses a hidden key to gain entry to victim's residence and takes property/jewelry.

**Burglary-Commercial:** 4200 BLOCK EMERALD ST Suspect(s) pries open door for entry/no loss.

**Vandalism:** 20700 BLOCK ANZA AVE Suspect(s) scratches victim's vehicle's paint.

**Burglary-Auto:** 22300 BLOCK OCEAN AVE Suspect(s) enters unlocked vehicle and takes property/wallet, checkbook.

**Auto Theft-All:** 23900 BLOCK ANZA AVE Stolen vehicle: '06 Ford van.

**Burglary-Residential:** 2700 BLOCK DALEMEAD ST Suspect(s) smashes glass door for entry, ransacks/unknown property loss at time of report.

**Burglary-Residential:** 16300 BLOCK VAN NESS AVE Suspect(s) pries off screen, pries open window, ransacks and takes property/cash, jewelry.

**Burglary-Auto:** 18200 BLOCK KINGS DALE AVE Suspect(s) enters vehicle by unknown means and takes property/pairs of new shoes. •

## SoCal ROC Adds Variety to High School Curriculum

By Dylan Little

On Monday, the Torrance School Board gave an overview of the Torrance Unified School District's (TUSD) partnership with the Southern California Regional Occupational Center (SoCal ROC). The partnership allows high school students to take vocational focused classes at both the District's high schools and the SoCal ROC campus.

SoCal ROC, formerly known as SCROC, has been offering vocational and skills training for adults and high school students in the South Bay since 1964. Tim Stowe, Senior Director of Secondary Schools, said currently nearly 1,800 students are enrolled in classes made possible by SoCal ROC at high school campuses and another estimated 317 are enrolled at SoCal ROC's facility at Crenshaw Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard. By offering SoCal ROC classes, the District is able to offer a wider selection of classes to its students, especially in areas that require special skills or equipment (like sign language or woodworking).

"They offer everything from administration of justice... to wood design, professional

ROC and other adult education programs is instead handed over to districts to use as they see fit. Superintendent George Mannon said that the SoCal ROC governing body is concerned that districts might choose not to hand over funding once the local control formula is approved.

"SoCal ROC is very concerned," said Mannon. "Under the Local Control Funding Formula... all funds are rolled into the base grant. So the two areas of concern right now for superintendents and other groups is what do you do with adult ed and the second one is what do you do with vocational funding. Our concern as superintendents in the area is...that certain districts might consider withholding those vocational funds and not passing them through to SoCal ROC."

The Board also received two donations, one from the Torrance-area Rotary clubs and another from the Torrance Education Foundation (TEF). Karen Greenberg of the Lomita-Torrance Airport Rotary Club represented local Rotarians from her club as well as the Torrance, Del Amo and South Bay Sunrise totaries and presented the Board

*"They offer everything from administration of justice... to wood design, professional dance, fashion design and graphic design,"*

dance, fashion design and graphic design," said Stowe. "It provides our students with a lot of variety for acquiring skills from hands-on classes."

In addition to offering more class choices, the partnership between Torrance Unified and SoCal ROC also saves the District money. For each student enrolled (up to a cap) SoCal ROC reimburses the District, subtracting the cost of the teacher. On average, a section taught at a Torrance high school costs only \$2,500--which is less than the District could pay if it were to hire new teachers for these sections. "It'll still cost us a little bit for the sections, but a fraction of what it'd cost without that reimbursement to TUSD," said Stowe.

While a portion of the classes are technical in nature and might not have been offered without the help from SoCal ROC, others replace high-level electives (such as professional dance being the highest level dance class for high schoolers) or create more sections for popular classes (such as photography and symphony band). "Most of these are courses that would exist, but we can offer more sections of them because of SoCal ROC," said Stowe.

The relationship between SoCal ROC and TUSD has been fruitful, though its future is uncertain. Under Governor Jerry Brown's new Local Control Funding Formula, the budget previously earmarked for SoCal

with a check for \$5,660 raised during the Rotary's UCLA vs. USC Tailgate Luncheon. Board President Michael Wermers appreciated the efforts to raise money for education. "Thank you very much for the donation," said Wermers. "It's very generous."

The second donation of the night was the \$5,000 added bonus TEF promised to the Torrance school that raised the most money in last year's Skechers Pier to Pier Walk fundraiser. This year, West High brought in the most money with a total of approximately \$10,000. While the funds from this year's walk are still being paid out, TEF President Tom Brewer is already asking parents and school fundraising coordinators to start planning for next year's walk (currently scheduled for October 27). He said that this is a perfect opportunity to bring in money for Torrance Unified because there is no cap on the donations that can be brought in other than participation. "I hope people put this on their calendars because there is an unlimited amount of money we can raise from this," said Brewer.

TEF is also promoting its ninth annual hybrid car raffle. This year, it will raffle a 2013 Lexus CT 200h. Tickets are \$30, with \$20 of that going directly to a school organization of the purchaser's choice. The winner will be announced at another major TEF event--the annual Celebrate Education dinner on March 29. •

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# Torrance Celebrates First Star Party of the Year

By Cristian Vasquez

More than 50 men, women and children attended this year's first star party with Paul Livio and the Riverside Astronomical Society at Torrance's Madrona Marsh. The event gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about the winter sky while getting to look at the constellations that are easier to view during January, as well as the moon and Jupiter, through telescopes.

"Paul started working with us in 2002 and he has provided between two and five programs a year since then for free. At night when people are out in nature or they are enjoying a night out, it is natural to just look up at the stars and start looking at the constellations and asking questions about what is where," Naturalist and Manager at the Madrona Marsh Tracey Drake said. "So we decided to provide these astronomy programs to answer those questions that our visitors had and to share the significant events that occur in the nighttime sky."

The evening's events, January 19, started with a 15-minute slide show presentation by Livio, who gave attendees a better idea of what to expect when stepping outside to look through the telescopes.

"The star party educates people about the universe. We have programs about dinosaurs, programs where we teach the kids about Einstein and we teach kids about fossils--we have people that bring spiders or people who bring bats," Mark Christiansen with the Madrona Marsh said. "It fits into the scientific part of what the Marsh is all about. Scientists study the marsh because it is close by. They would have to drive hundreds of miles away to get the kind of environment that they can get here. We have 250 different types of birds, which is a lot and it is close by. We also have a lot of colleges and universities that can come here and conduct studies."

In addition to the educational goals of the Marsh, the staff attempts to make the experience for those attending fun and engaging so that people will return. For Paula Tuckerman, the star party provided both the fun and knowledge needed to interest adults and children.

"My friend Janice comes for some of the walks and she told me about this, so I was really excited--but I didn't know that

the telescopes would be out. I grew up in Montana and you could see all the stars. You can't always see that many here, so this is a real advantage. It is also wonderful that there are so many young people here," Tuckerman said.

The star party also brought back memories for the Montana native who has had an appreciation for the galaxies and science from a young age.

"My father got us out of bed when Sputnik first went over, so when you talk about children being here it brings back a lot of memories of things that I did with him many, many years ago," Tuckerman said. "At the same time it makes this experience so vivid and so real--and through the lecture there is scientific terminology that as we are reading the news, we may not understand if we had not done the lecture."

The Riverside Astronomical Society, which works with the Marsh to host several of these events every year free of charge, has been providing civic and educational support since its inception in 1957.

"Paul is extremely passionate about astronomy and he is equally passionate about making sure that everybody who wants an opportunity to enjoy the same things that he does can do so," Drake said. "Even when he is giving the presentation, he is very deliberate and pays attention to the words that he uses and works very hard to convey really complicated concepts in a way that everybody can understand. I love his teaching style. It is very impressive and very inspirational."

The next free star party with Paul Livio and the RAS will take place at the Marsh on February 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

"The program has always been packed. People are just interested in the nighttime sky and there aren't many other places around the South Bay that provide these types of programs," Drake said. "There are astronomy programs tailored for kids that are kid-based, but this one is a mixed environment. It is for families and for people that are beginning to look at the sky all the way to people who understand a lot of the constellations and a lot about astronomical events."

For more information, persons interested can call the Marsh at 310-782-3989. •

## School Board

from front page

programs they find useful and reduce or suspend funding to underperforming programs. However, it also provides more funding to districts with high numbers of English learners and economically disadvantaged students--and less funding to districts like TUSD. If approved, LCFF would amount to a \$2.4 million cut when compared with funding based solely on attendance, but would still be a \$4.3 million improvement on TUSD's current funding. Still, Mannon thinks that for suburban districts, LCFF would be a disaster. "For 11 years, we will be underfunded," said Mannon. "We have grave concerns and it's not just TUSD, but all the nearby districts. The Governor's formula creates winners and losers and our neighbors, Palos Verdes, Manhattan Beach, El Segundo and us are all losers."

Board member Terry Ragins was also disappointed that the new formula was less than equitable to TUSD. She said that throughout her 10-year tenure, she has heard many complaints about the current funding formula and is saddened to see a system that would negatively impact Torrance schools. "I've been around 10 years and I've heard a lot about how this funding formula needs to be changed and now I'm sad to see it change in a way that hurts us," said Ragins.

While the District faces a mixed financial future, the Board did listen to some ideas for areas that could use more investment. The most commonly repeated topic was bringing class sizes down. Stabler, and nearly every speaker who addressed the Board, asked the District to hire more teachers to try to bring classrooms back to about 30 students at a cost of about \$1,382,000. Stabler also mentioned the potential plan to give all employees a one percent raise. He said that no one has

received a raise since the 2007-2008 school year. Raises would cost the District about \$1,352,000.

While smaller classrooms and better pay are typically common goals in the education field, there were several practical expenses that Stabler said were also very important. One such area is the District's maintenance and operations staff, which has been decimated in the wake of years of cuts. The District needs more personnel to keep the facilities running and the cutback has already led to a deterioration in school facilities. "We have limited personnel as it is, but now it's in even worse shape," said Stabler. "We have a very slim maintenance and operations staff here and there are some positions that have been eliminated that we could have back."

Along with more maintenance and operations staff, Stabler pointed out that the District could use more custodians. The custodians are already spread thin, especially in the District's elementary and middle schools. The idea would be to hire 10 full-time custodians. "The new personnel would provide us one night custodian for every elementary and middle school," said Stabler. "Right now, they are sharing one."

The Board was supportive of both plans presented by Stabler and the concerns of the speakers from the public. Board member Don Lee commented that undoing the massive cuts will be difficult and might not involve everyone getting everything they want, but should ultimately allow the District to emerge as a more forward-thinking entity. "We cut the budget with an ax and add to it rather surgically," said Lee. "Everything I heard tonight is valid. But as we move forward, we need to get over stuff. There is an opportunity to be more forward-thinking." •

## Business Briefs

from page 2

### ANNUAL MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION BENEFITS PEDIATRIC THERAPY NETWORK

The second Annual Mardi Gras Celebration benefiting Pediatric Therapy Network will be held on Thursday, February 28, 2013 and is presented by Sunrider International. The event will take place from 5:30pm to 9pm at the Miyako Hybrid Hotel at 21381 So. Western Avenue in Torrance and will include live jazz music, opportunity drawings and delicious food tastings from local restaurants including The Depot, Gonpachi, Red Car Brewery, Buffalo Fire Department, and Tortilla Cantina. All proceeds go to support PTN's therapeutic services and child development programs for children with special needs and for those at risk for developmental issues. Tickets are \$25 per person presale or \$35 at the door. For tickets, sponsorships or more information, call 310-328-0276 ext. 202 or visit [www.PediatricTherapyNetwork.org](http://www.PediatricTherapyNetwork.org).

### CSU DOMINGUEZ HILLS OFFERS DEGREE PROGRAMS ONLINE

California State University, Dominguez Hills will be among the first CSU campuses to offer bachelor's and master's degrees through the new Cal State Online, an initiative to provide a centralized structure of online program delivery for the CSU system. The Cal State Online website, [www.calstateonline.net](http://www.calstateonline.net). Three of those will be administered by CSU Dominguez Hills, with classes starting in May. They include the university's existing Bachelor of Science in Applied Studies, an interdisciplinary degree completion program geared to working individuals who have some college course credits; as well as the expansion of its Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Public Administration (MPA) offerings. The programs will be delivered in an accelerated format, with two eight-week sessions per semester in a trimester year, providing the potential for a student to complete his/her degree in 18 months from anywhere in the world. To learn more about

CSU Dominguez Hills degrees offered via Cal State Online, and more about the initiative, visit [www.calstateonline.net](http://www.calstateonline.net). For a list of CSU Dominguez Hills programs currently offered online, visit [dominguezonline.csudh.edu](http://dominguezonline.csudh.edu)

### WELLS FARGO TO HOST FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS WORKSHOP

For renters looking to purchase a home and homeowners looking to buy another home, Wells Fargo will host a special "First-Time Home Buyers Workshop" event Wednesday, February 13, 2013 starting at 7:00PM at the Wells Fargo Hawthorne/Artesia Branch, 4340 Artesia Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90504. The special 90-minute homebuyer workshop event is open to all interested and perspective homebuyers. During the workshop, led by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Consultants Oscar Marin and Jackie Cota, attendees will gain an understanding of how the home-buying and home-financing process works including: the benefits and costs of homeownership, choosing a realtor, qualifying for a home loan, explaining the "closing cost," tax benefits, types of home loans, credit management, financing strategies and more. Owning a home is both an opportunity and a responsibility. Being ready to buy a home depends on many factors, including your own personal situation. Overall, now may be a good time to buy for financially qualified customers with historically low mortgage interest rates and "buyers market" home sale prices. As a fair and responsible lending leader, Wells Fargo is ready to help perspective home buyers find financing that serves their immediate and long-term home financing needs. Wells Fargo wants to see clients choose a mortgage that will help keep them comfortably in their home for years to come. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage consultants are trained to pay attention to your goals, help you understand your options, and clearly explain how different loan programs work so that clients and perspective home buyers can make informed decisions. •

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# Politically Speaking

## One Man's Opinion

By Gerry Chong

An interesting story is currently circulating around the Internet that is purportedly true, but I could not vouch for its authenticity. I repeat this only to describe a mindset that ensues when an entitlement mentality erodes society's morality:

As a Realtor for the past 28 years, I thought I had seen or heard it all... until now. I was

*"She went on to tell us that each of them owed over 100K on their homes and were in the process of buying each other's homes for 10-15K cash."*

showing homes in Pontiac, Michigan one afternoon recently and showed up at a home at the 4 p.m. time my appointment was scheduled for. After I woke up the homeowner, she let us in and then proceeded to tell my buyers and I (sic) that she had already entered into a contract to sell the home on a short sale (a short sale is a sale where the bank accepts less money than is owed on the home). After some chit-chat, she proceeded to tell us that she and her sister (who also lived in the area) were buying each other's homes via the short sale process. I mentioned to her that I thought relatives could not be involved in those transactions. She smiled and said, "We have two different last names, so no one knows the difference."

She went on to tell us that each of them owed over 100K on their homes and were in the process of buying each other's homes for 10-15K cash. To top it off, they were each receiving \$3,000 in government-provided relocation assistance at the closing.

My buyers and I were amazed that she was outright admitting to fraud and yet, she

continued. She began to tell us that the best part of her scheme was that because they are currently not working, that they (both) are now receiving Section 8 vouchers. I said I thought those were for renters and she said, "That's the best part--me and my sister are going to be renting each other's homes so we don't even have to move, and Obama is going to give us each \$800 a month to pay

the rent!" She then picked up a picture of Obama and did a little happy dance around her living room and while she kissed the picture she was singing, "Thank you, Obama... thank you, Obama."

So here's the bottom line...Both of these scammers got at least \$80,000 in debt forgiven--\$3,000 in cash for relocation (when in fact, they did not relocate); and to boot, you and I will be paying \$1,600 in rent for them each and every month, perhaps forever...

End of story. Prominent Stanford University Economist and Hoover Fellow Dr. Thomas Sowell wisely noted, "One of the consequences of such notions as 'entitlements' is that people who have contributed nothing to society feel society owes them something, apparently for being nice enough to grace us with their presence."

Dr. Sowell continued, "I have never understood why it is 'greed' to want to keep the money you've earned, but not greed to want to take somebody else's money."

Good question, Dr. Sowell. Good question. •

## Another Man's Opinion

### Economic Recovery Slow but Steady

By Cristian Vasquez

It is no secret that the economy under President Obama has not fully recovered. Given the colossal collapse the economy took toward the end 2008 and beginning of 2009, it is going to take more than one term for a full recovery and the steps President Obama has taken are ensuring that such a recovery occurs. Beginning with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to the natural growth of businesses, the American economy is steadily recovering and getting stronger.

It is a given that nobody likes taxes being raised. However, after eight previous years of tax cuts and no significant job growth combined with the economic collapse, the response by the then-new administration was more than adequate. The famous or infamous stimulus money, depending on whom you ask, saved the economy. It is unfortunate that taxpayer money had to be used to save the private sector from an absolute meltdown, but had the President not taken such an action the consequences would have been dire. Despite the dreadful financial conditions that followed the end of 2008, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 spared many, many more American families from losing their jobs and homes. By keeping these millions of people employed, the economy was given a legitimate opportunity to recover.

An economy will only thrive when there is a supply of goods that people have the ability to purchase. Had the stimulus money not gone out to help states, counties and cities weather the financial catastrophe we were thrust into, employee numbers in education, public safety

(police, fire and homeland security, including border patrol and customs) and many other sectors would have been completely depleted. Keeping those individuals employed ensured that the country maintained a core of working individuals who would through their earnings kick-start the dying economy.

In order for the private sector to thrive, you need private citizens to spend. Granted that high tax rates lead to less disposable income, but without the President's actions there would have been far fewer segments of the population left with any sort of disposable income. Since the stimulus money was put into use, the economy has recovered. It's a slow recovery, but steady. According to The Bureau of Labor, since the middle of 2010 the country has seen an overall increase of employment, working hours and earnings. In addition, since October 2009 the employment rate has been on a steady decline--from 10 percent then to 7.8 percent in December 2012.

Are these numbers ideal? No. Are they what President Obama promised when campaigning in 2008? Not at all. Is it a healthy and significant improvement from where the country was in late 2008? Yes. The President's actions have slowly instilled life into an economy that had slowly deteriorated between 2000 and 2008. While the administration's tax hikes are a burden on anyone earning any kind of income, they were needed to address the woes that the country was suffering--and to this day, the investments have slowly paid off. Plus, after eight years of generous tax breaks and no significant economic and job growth, it was time to take a different approach. •

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# Sports

## Addicted to PEDs

By Adam Serrao

Competitive drive is something that simply cannot be denied as an evident characteristic in many, if not all, athletes involved in sports today. The drive to win is fierce inside of athletes who are clearly motivated by competition and by being the best at their particular sport. Pursuing dreams of coddling a gold-plated trophy or wearing a winning medal around one's neck is what every athlete longs for. For some of these athletes, however, the talent inherent within themselves is just not up to par with others in their same sport. Whether it is weaker training regimens, worse coaching, a lack of motivation or just less god-given ability, athletes who cannot perform up to their own expectations or the expectations placed upon them by friends or media have begun to rely on different ways to beat the system, if you will. One of the main ways and clearly the most popular way that athletes have begun to do so nowadays is by using performance enhancing drugs.

No sport is safe from or clear of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs). Although they have become most popular in the sport of baseball, this unfair way of manipulating one's potential is evident in sports such as football and basketball all the way through to boxing, track and field and even tennis and wrestling. There are well-known athletes who have gotten caught or admitted to taking the drugs like Manny Ramirez, Marion Jones, Alex Rodriguez, Barry Bonds and more. There are also lesser-known athletes such as Floyd Landis, Justin Gatlin and Chris Benoit, the latter of whom killed his wife and his son before hanging himself as an assumed result of these drugs in his system.

Clearly, as anyone associated with the Benoit

situation will tell you, taking these drugs is not without risk, but that risk is seen as subjective. Proponents claim that the harmful side effects of PEDs has been overstated and the health risks are an athlete's own decision to make. Much like improved training techniques and new technologies in the world of athletics, PEDs are simply the next in line in the evolution of sports (scary to think about where the sporting world will be 50 years from now). While the athletes who take these drugs tend to have a similar train of thought, they fail to consider the long-term effects that the drugs have on their minds, bodies and even friends and family members who surround them. The real reason these drugs have come under such scrutiny as of late, though, is because of the unfair advantage that they give the athlete who takes them and the unequal playing field that they create in the sport of consideration.

Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa were two athletes who, in their peak years, clearly gave the sports world a shot in the arm, so to speak. In 1998 and 1999, the two put on home run performances that were second to none for the viewing public, as everyone watched as McGwire ultimately broke Roger Maris' 37-year-old single season home run record. Sure, "chicks dig the long ball" and so did Barry Bonds, who later juiced up to get his name in the record books—but what about Maris, who made his mark on the sport fair and square? At 27 years of age, Maris broke the record not because of stimulants in his body, but because of pure ability and athleticism. How about the guy whose record Maris broke? Babe Ruth was a brute of a

See Addicted, page 11

## Up and Adam

### North's Rollercoaster Season Continues

By Adam Serrao

Every week of the season brings new twists and turns to the North High Saxons and this week was certainly no different. With key matchups against both South High and Lawndale on the docket, the Saxons were not only trying to win, but were also trying to avenge two key losses they suffered at the beginning of this month to the same two teams in question. The week started off just as head coach Luke Duperron had planned, as the Saxons came up with a big win on the road at South High. In their typical, inconsistent fashion of this year, however, North dropped the second game to Lawndale at home by a slim, two-point margin, all but eliminating the Saxons from their Pioneer League title hopes.

The Saxons were focused coming into this week knowing that two victories would not only get them great seeding in the playoffs, but also at least a share of the Pioneer League

*"We were more focused this time. The last time, we got a lead and relaxed and we lost the lead. This time, we knew we couldn't let up."*

crown. Last Wednesday, North took the court against the Spartans showing the focus and determination that Duperron had instilled in them. From the starting tip forward, the Saxons and Devante Jenkins dominated the Spartans, never trailing the entire game. Jenkins put up 17 points while also adding five rebounds and was the inspirational leader for North on the night. "I told my team to come out and run it up," Jenkins said. "We were more focused this time. The last time, we got a lead and relaxed and we lost the lead. This time, we knew we couldn't let up." North certainly didn't let up for the entirety of the game, holding a 13-point halftime lead and a 30-point lead in the fourth quarter. "Our kids played their hearts out," said Duperron. "We've gotten a lot better since the last time we faced them and are playing as a team now." That team mentality that Duperron spoke of certainly reared its head in the final quarter as the Saxons punctuated their win by holding the Spartans to only six fourth quarter points in a 73-42 victory. Austin Yamada contributed 16 points toward the winning cause, but knew what was up next for the Saxons. "We knew we had to win this game to have a chance at first place," Yamada said. "We need play like this against Lawndale."

The Saxons followed Yamada's lead and came out with the same intensity that they began with against the Spartans in their game against Lawndale. Down by only two points after the first quarter, North was able to put it together and take a three-point lead going into the half. The game stayed close for four quarters and was tied at 83 with only 36 seconds remaining. Will Newman, who has been leading the charge for Lawndale all season long, put a dagger into the hearts of the Saxons as he hit a mid-range jump shot with only 13 seconds left to give his team the two-point advantage. Jenkins took control for the Saxons, but his last-second three point shot ultimately fell short, giving Lawndale a slim 85-83 victory. Newman led all scorers with 39 points for Lawndale while Alex Thompson led the Saxons with 19 on the night.

Though the Saxons suffered the loss to first place Lawndale, they are clearly playing a better brand of basketball as Duperron previously explained. The team will finish off the season against the Torrance Tartars and will most likely receive an at-large bid into the playoffs should it stay ahead of Centennial in the standings. The Saxons have come a long way this season so far and now that they are playing together as a team, can look to do some damage come playoff time.

#### TORRANCE HIGH

The Torrance Tartars finally received the game that they have been looking for all season long as they notched their first league victory of the season and in the process got Andru Vaughan the first league victory of his head coaching career as the team took out El Segundo last Friday night in El Segundo by a final score of 73-37. It was one of the most impressive all-around games that a team in the Pioneer League has

played all season long and it came from the previously winless-in-league-play Torrance Tartars. The Tartars held El Segundo to only three second quarter points and a total of 12 first half points en route to their 36-point victory. Torrance finished strongly, capping the game off with a 24-point fourth quarter behind Corey Kitani's game-high 26 points and Brett Akahiji's 17 as the visiting Tartars got themselves their first win in 15 games. The Tartars will look to finish the season off on a high note as they face the North High Saxons to cap off their year.

#### WEST HIGH

The West High Warriors have continued their slumping ways to finish off this season as they took a 62-40 loss at home last Friday night to the Redondo Sea Hawks. Redondo jumped all over the Warriors at the start, taking an 11-point lead after just the first quarter of play. The Sea Hawks again outscored the Warriors by 11 in the third quarter en route to their 22-point victory on the night. Terrell Carter finished with 16 points for West, which will finish the season with games against Leuzinger and Peninsula. The Warriors are all but out of playoff contention, but did come through with a key victory over Palos Verdes earlier in the week to stay out of the cellar of the Bay League standings.

#### SOUTH HIGH

The Spartans are slipping at precisely the wrong time this year, as their loss to Centennial last Friday night marks the first time all season long that the team has suffered back-to-back defeats. The Saxons held the Spartans to one of the latter's worst offensive and defensive games of the season in the 73-42 victory over South last Wednesday night. Coach Klemm and the Spartans finished that up with a disappointing loss to Centennial in which South had its lowest point output of the season, taking the 44-37 loss last Friday night. The two losses drop the Spartans deeper into second place in the Pioneer League standings, remaining slightly ahead of North High. Up next for South is first place Lawndale before the Spartans finish the season off against last place El Segundo. Barring a major disappointment, South should surely make the playoffs. •



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# Sports

## North Boys Soccer Cuts Down Lawndale

Photos by Shelley Kemp

The North Torrance Varsity Boys Soccer Team defeated Lawndale at home in league play last Friday, 4-1. The North Team charged down the field to score within the first three minutes, setting the tone for the match, and went up by three midway through the first half. Although Lawndale was down 3-0, they rallied with a late goal with just under four minutes before halftime. The Saxons put a stop to the Cardinals by sealing the victory with yet another goal in the second half. The Saxons, now 5-3 in Pioneer League, finish up their regular season this week with games against El Segundo and Torrance. For more photos, please visit [www.ShelleyKempPhotography.com](http://www.ShelleyKempPhotography.com)



Junior Joseph Baltierra clears the ball. Baltierra contributed one goal for the Saxons.



Senior Jorge Orozco looks down field for a pass. Orozco tallied one goal for North.



Senior Goalkeeper Nicholas Alvarado leaps to make a save.



Senior Matthew Aldama heads the ball towards North's goal. Aldama scored two goals for the Saxons.



Senior Abunda Ajaekwa heads the ball towards the North Goal.

**7**here is an old saying: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

**Why only lemonade?**

Right now the Meyer Lemon crop is coming in and for those of you who haven't experienced these treats, you must try them. Wikipedia states the following:

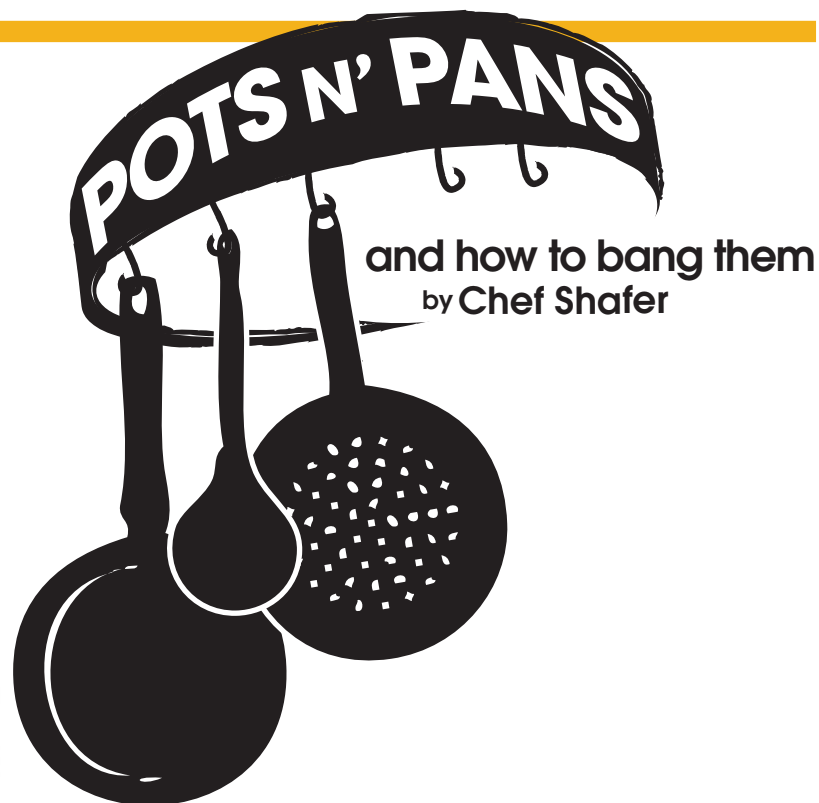
Citrus × meyeri, the Meyer lemon, is a citrus fruit native to China thought to be a cross between a true lemon and either a mandarin or common orange. It was introduced to the United States in 1908 as S.P.I. #23028 by the agricultural explorer Frank Nicholas Meyer, an employee of the United States Department of Agriculture who collected a sample of the plant on a trip to China.

The Meyer lemon is commonly grown in China in garden pots as an ornamental tree. It became popular as a food item in the United States after being rediscovered by chefs such as Alice Waters at Chez Panisse during the California Cuisine revolution. Popularity further climbed when Martha Stewart began featuring them in her recipes.

Now you all know my feelings toward Martha, but it won't stop me from singing the praises of these wonders.



*The Chef*



# Chef Shafer's Meyer Lemon Sauce

Here are three great uses for lemons using one recipe:

- 3 lemons
- 6 basil leaves chopped julienne
- 2 cups rigotta cheese
- salt and pepper

Finely grate the zest of the lemon. Try to get only the yellow skin or zest not the white part. Mix together with the basil, rigotta, and salt and pepper.

1. Use as a dipping sauce for veggies and bread sticks instead of ranch.
2. Spread for a sandwich with roasted pepper and smoked turkey.
3. Melt into warm pasta with sauteed spinach for Lemon Alfredo.

Hope you try this one and send us your feedback to depot@sbol.com. •

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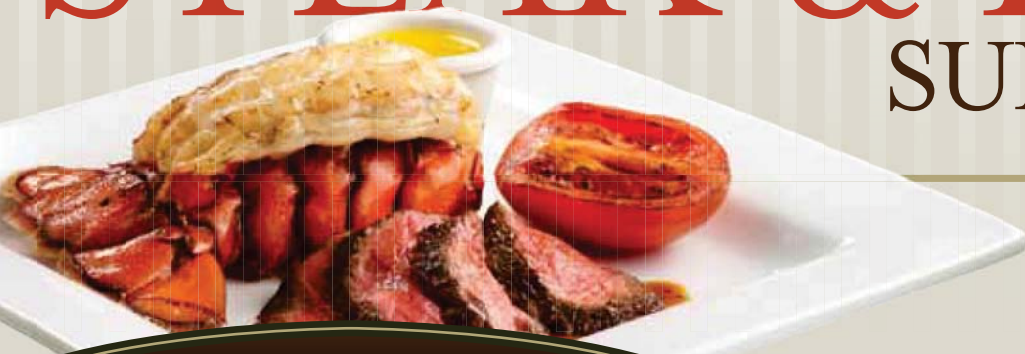
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## Love is Everywhere in Torrance

By TerriAnn Ferren

St. Valentine's Day is rapidly approaching. And even if I somehow forgot that the holiday was nearly here, the card shops, florists and candy shops would remind me. Greeting cards with red hearts trimmed with lace, chocolates and flowers are the usual gifts most people exchange. Thinking about St. Valentine's Day reminded me how I used to celebrate when I was little. My mom would buy a big bag of Valentine cards for my sister and me and we would make out a card for each person in our class. I wasn't sure if that was still true, but I found out children still enjoy giving and receiving Valentine cards with their classmates. We would also exchange small, pastel-colored candy hearts with little messages on them that said, "You're cool," "Kiss me," "Be mine," and other brief sentiments. Funny how much time we spent choosing just the right message for that perfect someone.



Brittany.

The origin of St. Valentine's Day is unclear. In school, I was told that Valentine was a bishop and martyr of the church who was put to death in Rome by Claudius II around 270 A.D. on February 14 for holding fast to his faith. He was also charged with marrying Christian couples and for helping Christians who were being persecuted. He was said to have sent messages from his jail cell--hence "valentines." Today I am not sure if all that is true, but St. Valentine did live and was put to death on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February--now the popular Valentine's Day that bears his name. An ancient belief was that young people would meet on the eve of St. Valentine's Day (girls and boys) drew names from a "hat" of the opposite sex so everyone would have a valentine. Frankly, I am not too sure about that story.

How do people celebrate St. Valentine's Day today? I decided to find out what some of the people in and around Torrance are planning.

Lyle Heck is a very special dad. Married to his bride Ellen for nearly 65 years, he has a special tradition for Valentine's Day. He not only makes the day special for his wife, but he makes sure his five daughters--Martha, Sara, Mary, Anna and Elizabeth--also have a very special day. The tradition began when the girls were young and Lyle would make



Lakers forward Earl Clark.



Jose and Claire Lemus.

Valentine cards for each of them. He would cut out hearts from construction paper and then write a special poem for each of his daughters highlighting their exceptional talents. I thought that was amazingly thoughtful for a father to do. I asked one of his daughters (all of them now in their 50s) if Lyle still gives Valentine cards to his wife and "the girls," and she said yes. How precious.

Tom and Jill Freeman of Torrance will have been married 50 years this April and have raised their four children here. I asked them how they spend Valentine's Day. They met in Minnesota and Jill explained, "My best girlfriend back in Minnesota was coming out to visit her fiancé in the Marine Corps and he [her fiancé] introduced me to Tom. And that was his best friend, so that is it. We met and got married and he wanted to stay out in California." I asked the Freemans for their secret to a long marriage and Tom said, "You know it gets easier as you get older--many ups and downs. We have a lot of things in common." For their Valentine's Day, Jill told me, "I was planning on fixing



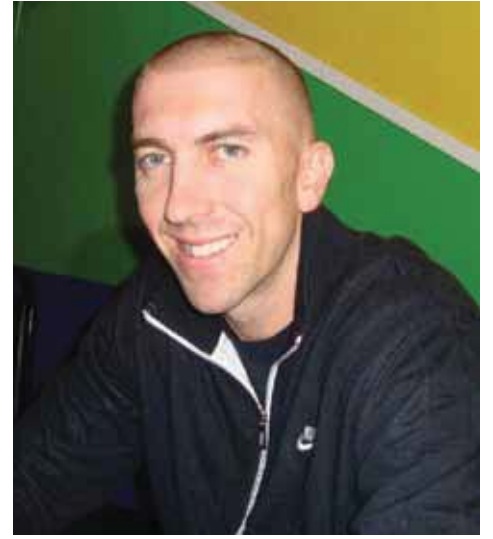
Lakers guard Jodie Meeks.

a nice dinner--just the two of us and opening a bottle of champagne I have been eyeing that looks good and the rest is history... Tom is really good to me. Tom has a surprise. He is really good at that. He surprises me. He gets up before I do." Tom added, "I will get some flowers and a card and 'something.'"

After meeting with the Freemans, I checked in with the Solomons--Bob and Diane. As the story goes, Diane "picked up" Bob at a party at the Colorado River. They have been married nearly 42 years and keep the romance alive in their relationship by always celebrating Valentine's Day whether it is with their grown children, grandchildren, or just by themselves. "We don't really have a traditional Valentine's Day," said Bob. "It usually is something a little bit different. Part

of it depends on what family is doing 'cuz we have kids and they have kids. There are times when they go out and need a place for the kids to go for Valentine's Day." Diane added, "Or we will do something together. But he always gets me a little card and writes me a little poem." I love the fact that Bob is another poet. "She [Diane] gets poems for lots of special occasions," added Bob. "He is more the poet and romantic at heart," said Diane. This couple has it worked out and their love is evident not only in their words, but in their deeds. Valentine's Day is just another day for Bob to write his bride of nearly 42 years another love poem. So sweet!

Ever wonder what famous basketball players might plan for Valentine's Day? At a Lakers' event in Torrance, I had the opportunity to ask three players that very question the other evening. Forward Earl Clark told me, "Probably go somewhere with my wife if I'm not on the road [I reminded him they play



Lakers guard Steve Blake.

a dinner and a gift," said Jose. Clair laughed as she looked at Jose and her eyes opened wide when she heard about the gift. Maybe this will be a special year for the couple.



Laker Girls; Melissa, Jacquelyn and Maddy.

the Clippers at home on Valentine's Day)... then I'll probably take my wife somewhere and get some food..." Laker guard Steve Blake spoke up and told me, "Just spend as much time as I can with my wife and take her out to dinner and treat her special 'cuz she is." And guard Jodie Meeks shared, "Play a game... but nothing really special." I asked Jodie if he would call his mom and he smiled and said, "Yes."

Brittney, one of the Laker Girls who was also at the event with some of the dance team, told me, "When I was a little girl, we usually would go to school on Valentine's Day and would give out the candy grams to all of our classmates. Now as an adult, I don't do too much. This year we have a game, so I will be going and rooting [for the Lakers]."

Also at the dinner were Jose and Claire Lemus, who shared with me that they plan on having a special Valentine's Day. "Usually

All week, I asked people from all walks of life what they plan to do on Valentine's Day. There are couples who have been married for decades and still gaze at each other with love. My parents have been married over half a century and I know how rare that is today. Some people I spoke with don't like having a day designated by a card company that dictates when they should show their husband and/or wife their love. I get that. Maybe that is because they treat every day as a special day. This year, I will remember those I love with a card and maybe some candy hearts just for old time's sake. And as Valentine's Day rolls around this year, I hope we all take time to remember all the people in our lives who deserve a little valentine, a candy heart, or a hug. Love is everywhere in Torrance. Lasting love, true love, timeless love and new love are blooming all over our town. Happy St. Valentine's Day! •



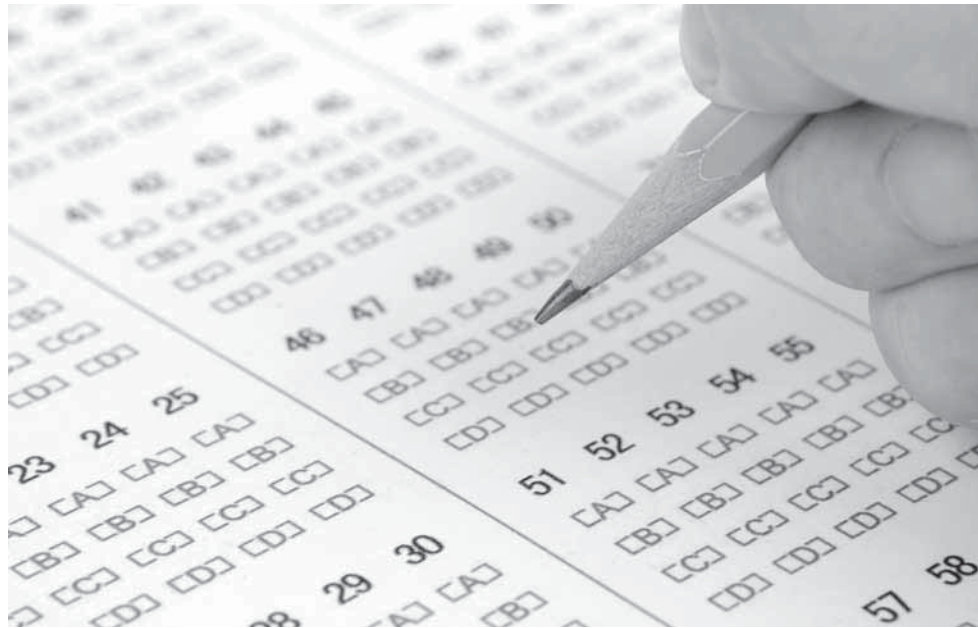
Diane and Bob Solomon. Photos by TerriAnn Ferren.

# A Student's Perspective

## The SAT Isn't Everything

By Glen Abalayan,  
Torrance High School Student

Finals week has come and gone and although this usually is a period of de-stressing, high school juniors are using this period to prepare for their SATs. This crucible of tests is a source of great stress among those planning to take it and causes families to spend hundreds of dollars on practice books, boot camps



and tutors. But although this test is viewed with great weight, its score should not be so important that it causes students to abandon other priorities.

The SAT is one of the most important, and consequently one of the most expensive, tests students will take during their high school career. Colleges use these scores to determine who is ready for their rigorous curriculum. A high score on the SAT is the metaphorical "icing on the cake" for a well-rounded student with high aspirations. The test's great importance is what most parents try to instill in their children's minds once the latter enter high school.

The weight the test score holds is what causes parents to purchase costly programs designed to improve the results. Prices range from \$50 to a few thousand dollars and the programs can last over two weeks. Parents have also grown accustomed to purchasing their child large, yearly SAT study guides complete with an entire chapter dedicated to the test's importance.

It is understood that parents only want the best for their children, but there are far better uses for the money spent on such programs. It is both quite amazing and daunting how the SAT-Prep business has grown to become a multi-million dollar industry that uses students' uncertainties about the test to boost profits.

Such large sums of money should be spent on a test that focuses on prior knowledge. The SAT is simply an assessment of all the topics a student should have already been comfortable with in the past. In most cases, the test focuses on the basic principles of math and English and how those can be applied

in real life. The million-dollar industry does not want people to know that the camps are actually lengthy reviews on subjects students have already learned. Of course it is common sense to study for such an important test, but it should not be viewed as something that the student cannot have completed without the aid of such gimmicks.

The industry has led people to believe that a

student's SAT score automatically determines the future fate in the rigorous applications process. This statement cannot be any further from the truth.

Over time, the SAT has blown so out of proportion that it compels people to think it is the only factor admissions counselors look for in students. This view may appear to be completely silly, but it is a close representation of what some people perceive. The SAT should not be the only thing students should focus on, as extracurricular activities and performance in the classroom are equally as important. It can be safe to say that colleges would look for someone who is well-rounded in all fields rather than those who scored a perfect 2400 on the SAT but otherwise neglected their priorities.

Being admitted to the college of their choice is a dream high school students want to achieve. The pressure that students face to stand out during admissions makes them feel as if they are walking on eggshells--careful not to do anything that will shatter their chances of getting into college. The SAT is a subject of great stress primarily for this reason and costs households countless dollars for the sake of a good score. But although the test should be set on a high priority, it should not be held so high that students will be willing to forsake equally important duties. There are many more factors colleges look for in students, as a high score is but a small piece of a much bigger picture. Beside the SAT, students can control other factors such as community involvement to make them more appealing to admissions counselors. Students should not base their life successes by numerical digits. •

# Social Security Checks to be Extinct by March

Linda Russell, Wells Fargo  
South Coast Community  
Bank President



For the more than 5 million consumers who still collect their Social Security by check, February is a crucial month for them. In order to save tax payers \$1 billion over 10 years and mitigate Social Security fraud, the government has informed these participants that they need to sign up for direct deposit or the Direct Express debit card by March 1, 2013. The only participants exempt are those who were born on or before May, 1921.

Although it's hard for many people to change their ways, it's important for them to know there are benefits by choosing either direct deposit or the government debit card.

### DIRECT DEPOSIT BENEFITS

Direct Deposit is a free service that automatically deposits recurring income received into any checking or savings account chosen by the customer.

It's convenient. Your money is deposited automatically into your checking or savings account, even when you are too busy to get to the bank.

It's fast. You have same-day access to your money on the day of deposit.

It's safe. Never worry about checks getting lost, delayed, or stolen.

Checking accounts are also a great value for consumers: they offer convenience, and multiple ways to access/manage their money and security. In many cases, having direct deposit is one way to waive a monthly service fee on a checking account.

### GOVERNMENT DEBIT CARD BENEFITS

The government card is a prepaid debit card payment option. Cardholders can make purchases, pay bills and get cash back at thousands of locations nationwide. There are no sign-up fees or monthly account fees. Consumers can use their card to make purchases, to pay bills, and get cash from an ATM or financial institution.

Switching from checks is fast, easy, convenient, safe and most importantly – its free. Consumers can go to [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org), call the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center's toll-free helpline at 1-800-333-1795 or simply visit with a local banker. •

## Addicted

from page 6

man, but instead of injecting butt cheeks with steroid-rich needles, he used ketchup and mustard-rich hot dogs injected directly into his mouth to gain the necessary strength to crack 60 home runs in 1927.

The exploits of Lance Armstrong have all, of course, been recently well documented. But some of Armstrong's words can help us all better understand why this form of cheating in sports has become so increasingly popular. "I didn't invent the culture and I didn't try

urge becomes unstoppable.

The pure beauty of sports has been lost with the aid of PEDs. These drugs have made the games all about what record will fall next or how many wins a certain player or team can achieve. Any true athlete gained love for their sport at a young age, playing with a stick and a ball out in the street in the 50-degree weather as the sun sank off into the distance and a cool breeze gently brushed against their cheek. That innocence has been lost. PEDs have

*"I think the Governor was very clear that we are going to have no new taxes without a vote of the people."*

to stop the culture," Armstrong said in his interview with Oprah that has recently gained nationwide exposure. "I tried to control the narrative." To Armstrong, cycling became more than just a sport somewhere along the way. Winning became a lifestyle that he became addicted to much like breaking home run records was to McGwire or Bonds. Winning once just wasn't enough. Armstrong needed seven yellow jerseys. Leading the league with 49 home runs wasn't enough. He needed 73. The addiction of light bulbs flashing, crowds roaring and everyone revering you quickly turns into an obsession and soon enough the

created a monster and taken the joy directly out of the game that these players and their fans once so adored. What's worse is that if it's allowed to continue, younger athletes will begin to think it is okay. They will begin to look up to "stars" like Alex Rodriguez who have done it all of their lives and be forced into taking these drugs to keep up with the new demands of strength and endurance that have since captured so many headlines. Rodriguez may indeed be in charge of himself and his own choices, but if as a "role model" he leads one other young athlete to follow in his footsteps, all has truly been lost. •

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## Finance

### Avoid These Home-seller Mistakes

By Jason Alderman

Now that the housing market has finally begun to stabilize and interest rates remain at historically low levels, more and more homebuyers and sellers are dipping their toes back in the water.

If you're planning to sell your home, you need to understand the tax implications of selling a home as well as be aware of structural and cosmetic flaws in your home and neighborhood that could undermine your asking price or keep the property languishing on the market for months.

First, the tax tips:

In general, if you make money on the sale, you can exclude the gain from your taxable income (as outlined below) if you've owned and used the home as your residence for two out of the past five years.

You may be able to exclude up to \$250,000 of the gain from your income (\$500,000 on most joint returns).

If you can exclude all of the gain, you don't need to report the sale on your tax return.

Gains that cannot be excluded are taxable. You must report them on Form 1040, Schedule D.

You cannot deduct a loss from the sale of your main home.

For more information, see IRS Publication 523, Selling Your Home (at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).

Many factors can negatively impact your being able to attract buyers and ultimately get the price you want. Sometimes there's not much you can do:

If you're located on a busy street or the local school district is subpar, you probably won't fetch as much as for the same house in a better neighborhood.

If your house is the only contemporary model in a sea of colonials or if your remodeled McMansion is surrounded by two bedroom/



one bathroom cottages, many buyers might be turned off. Not everyone wants to stand out from the crowd.

If you started remodeling and didn't complete the job, many people won't want to take that on, even with a significant reduction in price.

However, there are many relatively minor changes that may boost your home's marketability. For example:

If your interior or exterior walls are painted with bold colors or textures, it might be worth toning it down with a more neutral palette.

If you can afford it, have your home professionally staged, since they know how to maximize space and show off a home's strong points (while hiding its defects.) But if you're using your own furnishings, thin them out.

Mismatched appliances, cabinetry and plumbing fixtures stand out like sore thumbs. The same goes for worn floors or carpeting. Discuss with your realtor which improvements might be worth the investment.

Make sure your yard is well-tended and has at least basic landscaping. Overgrown weeds and abandoned junk don't help your curb appeal. The same principle applies for common areas if you live in a condominium.

If there are foreclosed homes in the neighborhood, chances are they aren't being well-maintained. Make contacts with the lenders taking over these properties so you can report problems such as vandalism, trash or overgrown yards. If they're unresponsive, ask your city's building department whether they can charge fines or penalties.

Also, work with your neighbors to keep an eye on empty homes. Take turns mowing the lawn, picking up trash and removing graffiti. Anything you can do to bring up the quality of the neighborhood will improve your chance of selling. •

## Ask the DMV

### Expert Answers to Common DMV Questions

Do you have questions about general driving related requirements like registration and insurance? Are you unclear about laws and restrictions related to driving? The California Department of Motor Vehicles has answers. Save Time. Go Online at [www.DMV.ca.gov](http://www.DMV.ca.gov).

**Q. How long do points stay on my driving record?**

A. Collisions and traffic offenses stay on your record for three years. However, hit and runs, reckless driving and DUIs will remain on your record for 10 years. For more information on what information retained on your driving record, please visit [http://www.DMV.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast\\_facts/ffd115.htm](http://www.DMV.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast_facts/ffd115.htm). Remember to Save Time. Go Online.

**Q. I just turned 16 and am now a licensed driver. I was planning on applying as a pizza delivery person, but my mom said that I can't be a delivery person until I'm 18. Is this true?**

A. Your mother is correct. Provisional drivers under 18 years of age cannot be employed to drive a motor vehicle. Once you turn 18,

provisional restrictions will no longer apply, so you can apply for jobs that require you to drive! For more information on provisional licenses, visit [http://www.DMV.ca.gov/dl/dl\\_info.htm#FIRSTYEAR](http://www.DMV.ca.gov/dl/dl_info.htm#FIRSTYEAR).

**Q. How long do I have to file a report with the DMV after a collision occurs?**

A. Traffic collisions should be reported to the DMV within 10 days if there was injury, death, and/or property damages in excess of \$750. To file a report, please fill out the SR-1 form at <http://www.DMV.ca.gov/forms/sr/sr1.pdf>.

*The DMV is a department under the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Acting Undersecretary Brian Kelly. The DMV licenses drivers, maintains driving records, registers and tracks official ownership of vehicles and vessels, investigates auto and identity-related fraud, and licenses car dealers, driving schools, and traffic violator schools. For more information about the DMV, visit [www.DMV.ca.gov](http://www.DMV.ca.gov).* •

## Valentine's Day Specials

for the ones you love

**See page 16**

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**Benihana** 21327 Hawthorne Blvd.

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**Bottle Shop** 2087 Torrance Blvd.

**Buffalo Fire Department** 1261 Cabrillo Ave.

**Capricciosa Italian** 24301 Crenshaw Blvd

**Chamber Of Commerce** 3400 Torrance Blvd.

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**Chateau Liquor** 4545 W. Sepulveda Blvd.

**Chinese Shanghai Restaurant** 2880 P.C.H., Torrance

**Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf** 21300B Hawthorne Blvd.

**Cookin' Stuff** 2722 Sepulveda Blvd., Torrance

**Cop-A-Tan** 24231 Crenshaw Blvd.

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**Creative Cuts Int'l.** 21217 Hawthorne Blvd.

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# Computer Ninja

## When Your Computer Dies, Does It Go to Heaven?

By Alex Bryan

Every parent fears the moment when their child will first ask them about what happens when people die. Many inevitable questions will follow from wondering whether spot the family dog will die some day to whether or not the obnoxious brother, despite his breaking all the most important rules, will still end up in heaven.



thing by recycling their electronics, but sometimes this does more harm than good. Often e-waste companies simply ship the equipment to China or Indonesia where environmental regulations are so non-existent that it would make The Simpson's Mr. Burns throw a party for the entire town of Springfield. Major

publications including Time, NPR, and The New York Times have done exposés on the computer recycling business and it's not pretty – children in third world countries have been found with lead levels over twenty times the EPA allowable limit – all due to home-brew recycling operations.

When it comes to computers, "end-of-life" is the term used by manufacturers. Like many appliances, computers have planned obsolescence built into them. It's just the nature of technology -- whatever new iThing you buy today won't be very relevant for long. Computer processing speed roughly doubles every two years, and newer, sexier laptops temp new buyers.

When most people no longer want their computer or phone, they usually just dump it in the trash. This certainly solves the problem of what to do with that old paperweight, but in the long run it creates more problems than it solves.

Computers are a very dirty business from production to disposal. Heavy metals used in circuitboards come from war-torn areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The high price of these metals fuel brutal wars and massive human rights violations. Once a device has been used, the way it is discarded can also have a severe impact. Devices thrown in landfills leach flame retardants and heavy metals like mercury and cadmium into the soil and water supply. If you happen to live in an area that still incinerates trash, those toxic compounds end up in the air you breathe. Sadly, if your device gets thrown away, all the expensive metals in it are lost and they must be mined all over again – a vicious cycle.

Many people know about the hazards of e-waste and try to do the responsible

So, what can you do? If your equipment isn't broken consider donating it to charity or putting it on craigslist. Companies like Kodak, Best Buy, and HP offer "takeback" programs where they'll pay for the shipping to get even broken devices. These get refurbished and given new life. If a takeback program isn't in your device's future, call a store in your area that services your device – they might be able to find it a new home after fixing it up. Your local repair shop can also direct you to a recycler they trust. If all else fails, check out some lists of recyclers in your area including the State of California E-waste program at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/electronics/collection/RecyclerSearch.aspx> or [greenergadgets.org](http://greenergadgets.org). Be sure to ask your recycler what they do with components that can't be fixed!

Remember the "Three Rs of Recycling": Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Electronics is a dirty business, but if we have to own them then we should all pitch in to make sure they are disposed of as responsibly as possible. Computers may not go to heaven, but at least we can make sure they find a good home.

For any questions or comments contact Alex at [calltheninja@gmail.com](mailto:calltheninja@gmail.com)

# Looking Up

## Chameleon Pulsar Baffles Astronomers

By Bob Eklund

An international team led by Dutch astronomers has made a tantalizing discovery about the way pulsars emit radiation. The emission of X-rays and radio waves by these pulsating neutron stars is able to change dramatically in seconds, simultaneously, in a way that cannot be explained with current theory. The research results appeared in the journal *Science* on 25 January.

Pulsars are small, spinning stars that are only about a dozen miles in diameter—the size of a small city—but which weigh as much as our sun. These super-dense objects have a strong magnetic field that is approximately one million times stronger than the fields scientists can make in laboratories on earth. The pulsar emits a beam of radiation. As the star spins—typically several times per second—the radio beam sweeps repeatedly over earth, and we detect short pulses of radiation—a bit like a lighthouse. Some pulsars emit radiation across the entire electromagnetic spectrum, including both X-ray and radio wavelengths.

It has been known for some time that some radio pulsars flip their behavior between two (or even more) states, changing the pattern and intensity of their radio pulses. The moment of flip is both unpredictable and sudden (often within a single rotation period).

The scientists studied a particular pulsar called PSR B0943+10, one of the first pulsars discovered. The pulses from PSR B0943+10 change in form and brightness every few hours, and these changes happen within about a second. It is as if the pulsar has two distinct personalities. As PSR B0943+10 is one of the few pulsars also known to emit X-ray radiation, knowing how this pulsar behaved in X-rays during the radio changes could provide new insight into the nature of the emission process.

Since the source is a weak X-ray emitter, the team used the most sensitive X-ray telescope in operation—the ESA-funded XMM-Newton.

The observations took place over six separate sessions of about six hours in duration. To identify the exact flips in the pulsar's radio behavior, the X-ray observations were tracked simultaneously with two of the most powerful radio telescopes in the world—GMRT and LOFAR.

The results were surprising. The X-rays did indeed change their behavior synchronously with the radio emission, as might have been expected. But in the state where the radio signal is strong and the pulses are clear, the X-rays were weak. And when the radio emission switched to weak, the X-rays intensified.

This unexpected chameleon-like behavior of the radio pulsar PSR B0943+10 bolsters fundamental research into the physical processes that occur in the extreme conditions which occur in the magnetosphere of pulsars, 45 years after their discovery.

The discovery of the first pulsar makes for an interesting story. In 1967 Jocelyn Bell, a graduate student at Cambridge University, was analyzing data from the university's radio telescope and came across radio signals that were faster (many pulses per second) and more regular than anything ever before observed. At first there was speculation that these might be signals from extraterrestrials ("Little Green Men"), but as she and her associates studied earlier theoretical papers they determined that these signals must come from rapidly spinning, super-dense collapsed stars—which had been theorized, but never observed.

In 1974, Antony Hewish, Bell's thesis advisor, was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics "for his decisive role in the discovery of pulsars" without Jocelyn Bell being named as a co-recipient—even though Bell had been the first to observe the pulsar.

Text & Images: <http://www.astron.nl/about-astron/press-public/news/chameleon-pulsar-baffles-astronomers/chameleon-pulsar-baffles-astro-0>  
Other pulsar photo: <http://chandra.harvard.edu/photo/>

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## Council

from front page

youth programs. Scotto commended the group for the years of assistance it has provided to the library. He even jovially remarked that he did not need his script because of how frequently the group is at City Hall presenting donations. City Librarian Hilary Theyer also thanked the volunteer group for its support, which she said goes above and beyond what the friends of other library systems can accomplish. "When I tell [other cities' librarians] what our friends do for us, it usually inspires jealousy," said Theyer. "So much of what we do wouldn't be possible without them. We have the best friends in the world."

The Centennial Committee gave its final report, which included past highlights like the Torrance Historical Homes Tour and the Birthday Bash held at Wilson Park. The report also had another surprising entry, showing that the committee ended its festivities with \$103,706.57 in the budget. The remaining balance will be returned to the City and is more than enough to repay the \$100,000 in seed money given to the committee. Centennial Committee Vice Chair and former Mayor Dee Hardison remarked that she can't remember another City program that paid back more

cash than paid out. "I don't remember ever a time when I was involved with the City that we gave out \$100,000 and got \$103,000 back," said Hardison.

While the ending surplus was a great bonus, the main focus of the centennial year was to celebrate Torrance's history. Committee Chair Laurie Love said that while remaining fiscally sound, her organization lived up to its goals. "In addition to running a very fiscally sound and cost-effective continuous year in budgets, the Centennial Committee should be commended for also having accomplished its goals, which were to celebrate, educate and commemorate the hundredth birthday of the City of Torrance," said Love.

Scotto thanked the committee for its hard work. He recognized the challenge that putting on a successful centennial event entails and shared that other cities weren't sure that Torrance's celebration would be as successful as it proved to be. "At the outset of this, we were contacted by other cities--I don't want to mention the other cities--saying how difficult it would be to put on this kind of event and questioning if the community would embrace it," said Scotto. "But obviously the city did embrace it."

## WEEKLY CROSSWORD See Answers Next Week

### Rhymes

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	52				53	54				55	56	57
58						59				60			
61						62				63			
64						65				66			

### Across

- 1. White rice's lack
- 5. Balancing pro
- 8. Put in a nutshell
- 13. Pervasive quality
- 14. Fruitless
- 15. Develop
- 16. Follow a recipe directive
- 17. Figure in Maori mythology
- 18. Corset tightener
- 19. Be a generous trapper
- 22. Diaper cream ingredient
- 23. \_\_\_ Day
- 24. Mathematical function
- 27. Epitome of simplicity
- 29. Car with a bar
- 33. Divination deck
- 34. It may be bid
- 36. Center of a ball?
- 37. Buy a beachfront boutique
- 40. Night of poetry
- 41. Katzbalger, e.g.
- 42. Undulating
- 43. Environs
- 45. Belgium village
- 46. Climbing herbs
- 47. Perceive

### Down

- 1. It may be striped
- 2. Gordon or Ginsburg
- 3. "Mi chiamano Mimi," e.g.
- 4. Role in "Arrested Development"
- 5. Black band of mourning
- 6. Falafel bread
- 7. Jewish month
- 8. Hot stuff
- 9. \_\_\_ nitrate
- 10. Flexible mineral
- 11. End \_\_\_
- 12. Title for some priests
- 14. Bad lighting?
- 20. Lifts up

- 21. Run the show
- 24. Muddleheaded
- 25. Speed demon
- 26. Grimalkin
- 27. Dig, so to speak
- 28. Shuttlecock
- 30. Some reality show winners
- 31. Actress Oberon
- 32. Doesn't ignore
- 34. Call to a mate
- 35. Bridal party members
- 38. Takes out a fly
- 39. Metal worker
- 44. Radiant
- 46. Air freshener option
- 48. \_\_\_ Island National Monument
- 49. Cold
- 50. Wet septet
- 51. No gain, no loss
- 52. Actual being
- 53. Actor Alan
- 54. Brio
- 55. Alternatively
- 56. Carrey vehicle
- 57. Enrich, in a way

### Last Week's Answers

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

### SUDOKU Medium

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

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9x9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3x3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9.

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pressrelease@heraldpublications.com  
 For press releases and submissions for consideration

**Graphic Artists**  
 Mike Gonzales  
 Matt Lopez

**Contributing Writers**  
 Gerry Chong, TerriAnn Ferren,  
 Dylan Little, Greg McMullin,  
 Duane Plank, Adam Serrao,  
 Brian Simon, Joe Snyder,  
 Cristian Vasquez

Photographer: Shelly Kemp

# Real Estate

## Start Planning Now For Spring's Home Makeover

(BPT) - If April showers bring May flowers, what do winter's snowflakes bring? Perhaps it's an excuse to curl up with your favorite magazines and imagine the kitchen makeover of your dreams. When the cold winter months keep you indoors, use the time to take care of things that will make your remodeling plans much easier to tackle in the spring.

### DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF YOUR PROJECT:

Do you need just a few coats of paint or a whole new kitchen? Take this time to evaluate what you want to accomplish. If you need to work with a designer or contractor, now is the time to do your research and engage professional help to plan. Look to online resources like the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and Houzz or ask friends and family for recommendations. Meet with a few prospects and see whose work and costs fit your needs. You should also determine your budget and use that to guide the rest of your planning decisions.

### LOOK FOR TRENDS THAT LAST:

Once you have a good sense for what your project will involve, have fun dreaming up all the details. Are you looking to make a bold statement or create a timeless look? No matter how large or small your project, there are many current trends that can make a big impact in your home, yet will stand the test of time. In the kitchen, white cabinetry has had a resurgence of popularity and can create a classic look or serve as the perfect complement to colorful statement pieces that can be easily swapped out as trends change.

Throughout the home, universal design is also becoming an increasingly important trend to consider. Planning your remodel so the space is comfortable to use for all ages and abilities will not only ensure your long-term enjoyment of the space, but can also help with resale value down the road. "As more and more homeowners are looking to age in place, they're demanding designs that accommodate their changing needs without compromising on style," says Sarah Reep, Merillat Cabinetry's design lead. •

### CLEAN HOUSE:

When you're ready to get started on your remodel, you won't want to worry about cleaning. Take time now to look at everything stored in your kitchen and pantry and determine what stays and what can go. It'll make prepping for renovation projects that

much easier. How old are those spices? What about that stack of lids with no container to match? Have lots of totes and bags hanging around? Donate the ones you don't use and organize the rest. If you have kitchen items you can't part with but you rarely use, pack them up now and store them until the remodel

is complete. You'll want as much free space to keep things out of the way during your remodel as possible.

If you take time now to get prepared for your kitchen remodel, you'll thank yourself in a few months when the kitchen of your dreams is coming to life.



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## How to Make Your Proposal Perfect

(BPT) - You've picked the perfect ring. You've practiced the words you'll use when you propose. But you know she would be livid if you asked her on the big screen at a sporting event.

Making an engagement truly memorable will win you points for a lifetime each time she retells your engagement story. These tips will help your engagement stick out. With so many engagements between Christmas and Valentine's Day, here are some great ways to make your engagement be one of a kind.

### TAKE IT PERSONALLY

You are proposing to the woman or man of your dreams. The one person you've chosen to spend the rest of your life with. The person who is the perfectly unique match to yourself. So, make the proposal just as personalized and special as that person. Yes, you may have chosen the perfect ring, but presentation is equally important.

Choose something that will not only stun your betrothed, but also be something he or she can keep for years. Ditch the typical velvet box and go for a personalized, engraved keepsake box from Things Remembered. With dozens of box options, you can perfectly match the style of your new fiancé, from classic and elegant to contemporary chic.

Then, take it one step further and engrave something meaningful to commemorate this day. Your names, the date you were engaged or a personal love saying (that maybe only the two of you understand) are ideal inscriptions.

### MAKE IT A PARTY

Yes, the holiday season is filled with parties, but a personal engagement party is something that you and your families will remember forever. Whether you choose a private, intimate locale to pop the question or a bustling public setting, convene family and friends during or afterward to celebrate together. Plan a special party to commemorate this momentous, life-changing occasion.

Don't forget, a great party doesn't necessarily mean great expense. Gathering at home with champagne, maybe a cheese plate and a homemade music playlist can make for one of the most memorable occasions of your life. Just be sure your future spouse is the center of attention, and you'll be set to make the event unforgettable.

### CAPTURE THE MOMENT

Nearly all couples choose to hire photographers and videographers to capture the memories of their wedding day. But isn't the engagement just as momentous? As your heart begins to race when your knee bends toward the ground, the last thing on your mind will be your camera. But being able to actually look back at this moment will be something you'll treasure for years to come.

The holidays are busy for everyone; so if you plan on hiring a professional photographer, make sure to call at least a few weeks in advance. Luckily, unlike your wedding day, you'll probably only need the photographer for an hour or so. If you're already on a shoestring budget, see if a photography enthusiast friend will take photos for you. They may not end up in The Louvre, but with a decent camera, you'll be sure to have some great snapshots of the big moment.

When it's all said and done, you and your new fiancé may not remember every tiny detail. But using these simple tips will ensure your engagement day is a truly unique, memorable experience for you both.

