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SCRIPPS RANCH NEWS

Volume 3 Issue 12 • November 2020



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Quincy to the rescue

Teacher relies on her popular service dog

By Terry L. Wilson

According to the United States Service Dog Registry, more than 50,000 four-legged lifesavers are hard at work in the United States.

Quincy, a standard poodle, is one of those hard-working animals, and he has become a very popular member of the Scripps Ranch community, especially with the students at Marshall Middle School (MMS).

Quincy's human is Susan Beisel, a science teacher at MMS, and like thousands of others, she requires the help of a service dog due to a medical condition.

One of her needs was to find a sneeze-proof dog. Beisel searched for a hypoallergenic canine that would stand steady and was also big enough to help his human get up and down, and it had to be a very smart dog to learn and perform all the necessary service functions Beisel required.

"Part of selecting a service dog is letting the dog select you, instead of you selecting him. Many of the breeders I contacted wanted to pick a dog for me. I said, 'No, I



Teacher Susan Beisel's service dog, Quincy, displays his official Golden State Service Dog vest certifying his accreditation. (courtesy of Susan Beisel)

See **QUINCY**, Page 16

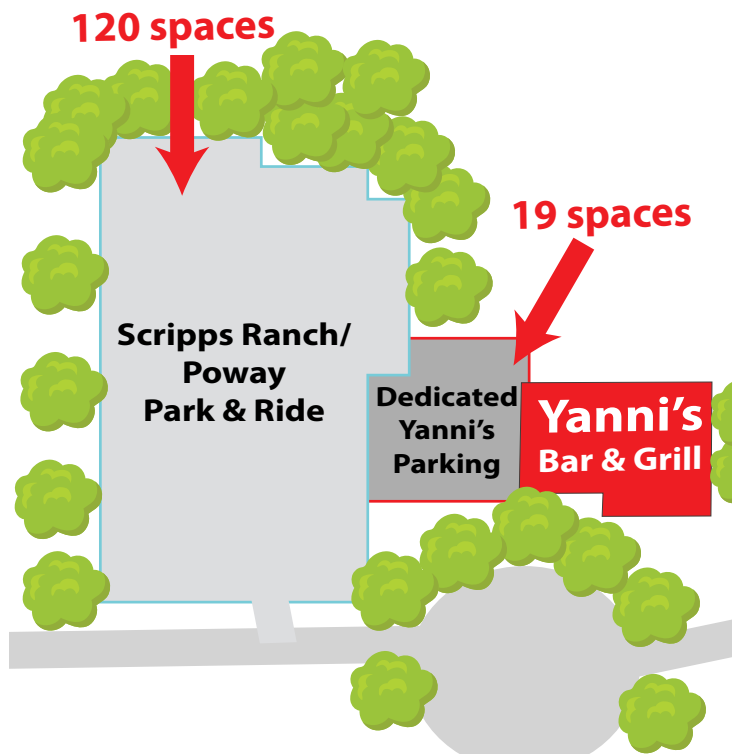
Restaurant owner: project threatens livelihood

By Hoyt Smith

Owners of a Scripps Ranch restaurant claim they've been blindsided by a proposal from outgoing Mayor Kevin Faulconer and the City of San Diego to develop permanent supportive housing (PSH) units on a 1.42-acre city-owned Park and Ride lot adjacent to their business – a project they say could threaten their livelihood.

The Scripps Ranch Park and Ride lot, which the City and Mayor Faulconer have described as "vacant" in their statements, is utilized by ride-sharing commuters and patrons of Yanni's Bar & Grill at 12015 Scripps Highlands Drive.

There are 19 spaces for Yanni's Bar & Grill customers in one lot next to the restaurant and 120 parking spaces in the nearby Park and Ride lot, which is available for use by Yanni's customers starting at 4 p.m. A substantial conformance re-



Yanni's Bar & Grill is on the right, its parking lot with 19 spaces sits to the left and the Park and Ride lot is further left with 120 parking spaces.

view (SCR) letter verifying these terms for the owner of the property and Scripps Gateway Freeway Center businesses was included in documents given to the Pihhas family when they purchased the property.

In October, the City Council conditionally awarded San Diego Community Housing Corporation (SDCHC) a bid to develop the lot into 60 residential units for veterans and seniors.

See **RESTAURANT**, Page 6

Lighting contest

It seems that folks are ready for the holidays to begin this year more than ever. The Scripps Ranch News Home Lighting Contest, sponsored by 24/7 Realty, is a great way for residents to get into the holiday spirit.

The theme for this year's contest is "Home for the Holidays."

Anyone with a home in Scripps Ranch who will decorate the outside of their home with holiday lights is eligible to enter the contest. There is no charge to enter. Prizes will be awarded to the top entrants.

Judges will drive by the properties in the contest to view the lighting displays. Once judging is complete, the top displays will be photographed. Photos of the winning displays will be published in the special December holiday issue of Scripps Ranch News. Deadline to enter is Dec. 2, 2020.

Prizes are provided by 24/7 Realty.

To enter, visit scripps-ranchnews.com/contest.

Send images to the Photo Showcase

Do you have a colorful or exciting photo you took in Scripps Ranch this year? Now is your chance to show it off in the 2020 Scripps Ranch News Photo Showcase.

Submitted photos will be published in the special December Holiday Issue of Scripps Ranch News and also posted on Scripps-RanchNews.com.

There is no charge to participate.

It's easy to enter: Email a photo taken in Scripps Ranch in 2020 to info@scripps-ranchnews.com. Photos must be high-resolution, at least 300 dpi. Include the name and address of the photographer. Include the date and location the photo was taken.

Rules: All photos must have been taken within the 92131 Zip Code area of Scripps Ranch.

All photos must have been taken within the year 2020.

No Photoshop or alterations allowed.

Only amateur photographers are allowed to enter their photos. No professional photographers.

Deadline: Dec. 1, 2020

Send to: info@scripps-ranchnews.com.

Student makes a positive impact

By Hector Trujillo

The worst global pandemic in a century has not deterred some from making a positive impact in people's lives. A case in point is Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS) student Spencer Mountain, who took it upon herself to bring a measure of joy to those struggling by joining forces with the Got Sneakers recycling organization to help the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

"The best thing about being involved in something like this was realizing that I could support a variety of people in need, and all from home," Spencer said.

A sophomore at SRHS, Spencer was looking for a community service project and wanted to do something to support the fight against juvenile diabetes, taking into account that her father, Rod Mountain, suffers from the same condition. Being an avid runner and soccer player, which includes playing JV soccer and running track for her high school, Spencer was planning to do a series of 5k fun runs to



Spencer Mountain displays shoes she collected to benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation through the Got Sneakers organization. (courtesy Mare Mountain)

raise money – that was until COVID-19 came along.

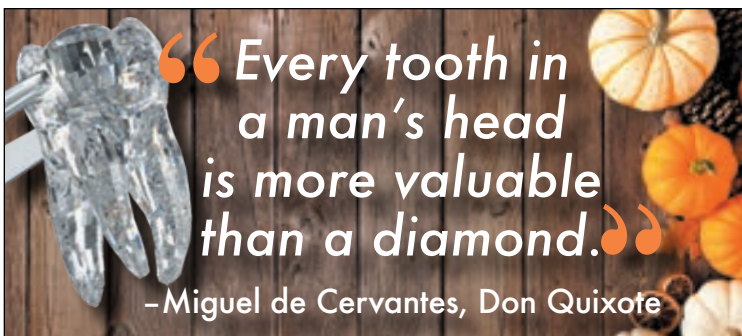
"She started Googling and looking for other ways to fundraise and came across Got Sneakers," said Spencer's mother Mare Mountain. "It was a perfect fit because collecting sneakers, tennis shoes and cleats tied into her participation in soccer. It was also a way of helping two great causes at once."

Spencer was able to collect shoes from more than 150 people during the drive which lasted the entire month of October and accounted for more than 1,000 pairs of sneakers.

"Our garage quickly filled with bags and boxes of sneakers, and Got Sneakers sent us big collection bags with prepaid postage," Mare said. "We offered contactless pickup of the shoes from people's front porches and the whole community really came together to help us with this fundraiser. I was really proud of Spencer."

This endeavor did not rely solely on word of mouth, but was also promoted through postings on the Scripps Ranch Soccer Club Facebook page, the St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church Facebook page and the Scripps Ranch Information Exchange

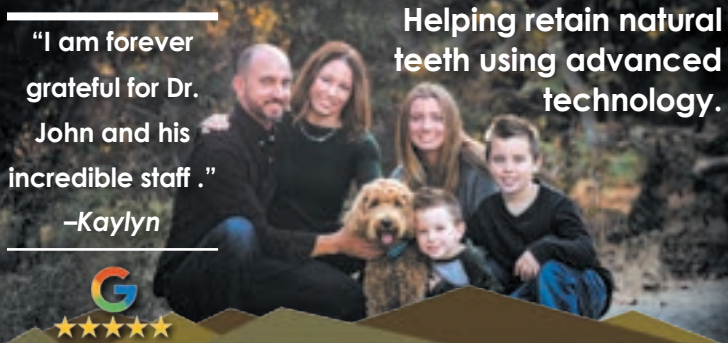
See **POSITIVE IMPACT**, Page 4



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–Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote

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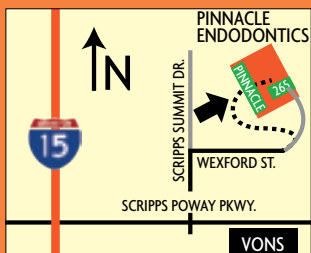
–Kaylyn

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Youths volunteer to help the homeless

By Nick Ng

COVID-19 could not prevent two Scripps Ranch youths from helping San Diego's homeless. Jack Hurley, 16, and Miles Hurley, 12, continue to collect donations to purchase food and supplies with Teen Volunteers in Action (TVIA), a community service program for young men from grades seven to 10.

TVIA has six chapters that serve throughout San Diego County where it sends volunteers to various events to help the homeless and the poor.

"There are five events a year pre-COVID, and you sign up for it," said Jack, who has been volunteering for more than two years. "Before COVID, I would go to these events and hand out food and have conversations with the homeless to get to know who they are."

Miles started with TVIA this year and has not been able to attend any regular events yet since none are being held during the COVID pandemic.

"I just want to help people in need," Miles said. "It's fun to do this and I help out the community."

Jack initially volunteered to earn college credits. However, when he started to participate in the events more often, he "really got to know" some of the people he was helping. He recalls the time he volunteered at the Mary and Gary West Senior Center in downtown San Diego.

"I remember helping this lady with Bingo. She was very happy to have me help her with it, and it makes me very happy," Jack said.

Another event that Jack volunteered for was Burrito Boyz, a nonprofit organization that has been providing meals to the homeless in San Diego for nearly 10 years.

"The people who run it are very involved," he said. "They are from Long Island Mike's in Clairemont Mesa and made 700 burritos for the homeless in downtown. In other events, they just tell you what to do. Here, they work with you."

Currently, instead of working at these events, Jack

See **TEEN VOLUNTEERS**, Page 4



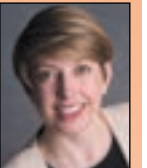
Jack and Miles Hurley purchase food and supplies for Teen Volunteers in Action. (courtesy of Jennifer Torio)

NEWS

San Diego election results announced

These are the results of the Nov. 3 General Election tallied by the San Diego County Registrar's Office as of Nov. 12:

First of all, Scripps Ranch will have a local resident in office for San Diego City Council District 5. **Marni Von Wilpert**, born and raised in Scripps Ranch and residing just a mile from her childhood home where her parents still live, has defeated opponent Joe Leventhal for the San Diego City Council District 5 seat. Von Wilpert has served as a deputy city attorney for San Diego. She accumulated 53.25 percent of the vote while Leventhal received 46.75 percent.



Marni Von Wilpert

Incumbent San Diego City Attorney **Mara Elliott**, also a Scripps Ranch resident, has soundly defeated Cory Briggs and will remain the San Diego City Attorney. Elliott received 66.60 percent of the vote and Briggs received 33.40 percent.



Mara Elliott

Meanwhile, San Diego County District 3 Supervisor incumbent Kristin Gaspar, a North County resident who outwardly aligned herself with President Donald Trump, was defeated by challenger **Terra Lawson-Remer**. San Diego County District 3 includes Scripps Ranch. Lawson-Remer had 58.11 percent of the vote while Gaspar received 41.89 percent.

Todd Gloria, a former San Diego City Council member and California State Assembly member, will be the new mayor of San Diego. Gloria defeated Barbara Bry, a San Diego City Councilmember for District 1 and longtime entrepreneur. Gloria accumulated 55.99 percent of the vote while Bry received 44.01 percent.

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TEEN VOLUNTEERS

Continued from Page 3

and Miles text friends to ask for donations to buy food and supplies. Once they have purchased them, they drop them off at one of several TVIA food locations every weekend.

“With COVID, everything is contactless,” said Jennifer Torio, mother of Jack and Miles. “Every weekend, volunteers bring different foods to me, like pasta, snack bars and oatmeal, so I can drop them off. We get hundreds of cans or snack bars from these collections.”

She first got involved with TVIA because her colleagues in the mental health profession recommended it to her.

“I was part of the Chapter Five’s board of TVIA, vice president of programs,” Torio said. “I coordinated speakers to come in and talk to the parents. They would talk about teen brain health, including the impact of gaming, lack of sleep and empathy in times of high technology.”

Torio said that they are currently volunteering for a project for Community Resource Center, a non-profit organization that helps domestic violence victims, helping deliver donations to the shelters.

Meanwhile, Jack and Miles encourage other teens and families in Scripps Ranch to volunteer.

“College credits might encourage more to sign up, but once they do it, they will appreciate the work they’re doing,” Jack said.

“We don’t get to go out much,” Miles said. “When we’re helping the community, I want others to help, too.”

TVIA is currently not accepting new volunteers, however, parents and teens who are interested can apply in March 2021. The organization only accepts volunteers who are referred by someone in the program. Visit tvia.org for more information.

POSITIVE IMPACT

Continued from Page 2

and Buy Nothing Facebook pages. The donated shoes were picked up from every part of the community, a community that Spencer and her family know quite well, having lived in the Scripps Ranch area for 10 years.

“I plan to do this every year. I will also look for other ways to support the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation,” Spencer said. “Hopefully, fun runs will be able to start up again soon.”

Got Sneakers will send the shoes to many persons living in impoverished countries.



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MK Band performs for seniors virtually

By Ashley Shah

Sagey Moorjani, a sophomore at Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS), alongside her two brothers who attend Thurgood Marshall Middle School – Devin Moorjani and Ashay Moorjani – have found a way to bring entertainment to senior citizens even through the COVID-19 pandemic.

In July, the three siblings reached out to a couple of senior homes in Canada and the United States. They then began performing virtual concerts for these seniors each week and the Moorjani Kids (MK) Band Project was formed.

“We’ve always had a love for music, but no way to channel it and this is our opportunity,” Sagey said.

They perform for four senior facilities in Canada, one of which is an assisted living facility and the other three are day programs, and one assisted living facility in Palm Springs. They perform four shows a week, each show lasting about half an hour.

“We perform shows on



Ashay Moorjani (from left), Sagey Moorjani and Devin Moorjani formed the MK Band Project and perform live for seniors with virtual shows. (courtesy of Seema Moorjani)

Wednesday and Friday at 7:15 a.m. because of the time difference, and then log onto school right after. We also perform twice on Tuesdays,” Ashay said.

Each week, they are in charge of learning two to three new songs that are requested from each senior citizens home.

“Usually, the songs that are requested are from the ’50s, ’60s and ’70s. We learn these songs on the weekends so that we can perform them on the weekdays. It can be kind of challenging

having to learn these songs because we have to make up the harmonies and chords, but it’s definitely worth it,” Devin said.

Most of the seniors they perform for suffer from diseases such as Alzheimer’s and dementia.

“It’s really such a reward to see the light on their faces when we play for them. It’s nice to see them interact with the music when they start dancing and singing. I feel like the performances are really special and fun for them since they



Residents at an assisted living home in Palm Springs enjoy a live, virtual performance of the MK Band. (courtesy of Seema Moorjani)

can’t have any visitors right now,” Sagey said.

Through this experience, they have been able to create connections with the seniors for whom they perform.

“I’m super proud of them because they are learning songs that they aren’t familiar with. They’re able to see and perform for their grandpa as well as the regulars, and putting a smile on their faces is something the kids all really look forward to each week. They know that music is good for the brain

and helps these folks with dementia and Alzheimer’s,” mother Seema Moorjani said.

Their inspiration for performing stems from their love of singing and playing guitar.

“Our love for music first began from our elementary school music teacher and just continued throughout the years, and our love for guitar comes from our local music teacher here in Scripps Ranch,” Ashay said.

Since July, they have now

See **MK BAND**, Page 6



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RESTAURANT

Continued from Page 1

Once open, the project “will provide on-site case management through the San Diego Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly,” according to the City.

“There is a great need in our community for housing that gives folks a real chance to have a place of their own,” said the Mayor in a prepared statement. “This public-private partnership will help transform these vacant City-owned properties into opportunities that will change the lives of so many of our fellow San Diegans for the better.”

If approved, the housing project is targeted to open in January 2024. At issue is how parking for Yanni’s, surrounding businesses and commuters will be impacted during and after construction. Complicating matters is the disputed substantial conformance review, which Yanni’s owners contend allows their patrons to park in the Park and Ride lot after 4 p.m.

Yanni and Denise Pihass have operated their business for almost 19 years. They opened a restaurant at the Trident Center in Poway in 2002 but relocated to their current site in 2014 because they said limited parking had hampered growth at the

former location.

Yanni’s Bar & Grill is located on a well-maintained property, situated between two hotels and conveniently close to business parks, three communities and the freeway. Its 4,000 square-foot dining room accommodates customers for lunch and dinner, and two patios plus another – used on weekends – have allowed the restaurant to remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Yanni purchased the property six years ago when he relocated his restaurant, the declaration of covenants, conditions and restrictions (known as CC&Rs) stipulated that customers of Yanni’s Bar & Grill could park in the adjacent Park and Ride lot starting at 4 p.m. The lot was developed by the previous owners of the property and has been landscaped, illuminated, repaved, maintained and cleaned by the Scripps Gateway Center Association. The lot has been used by Scripps Gateway Freeway Center businesses in conjunction with the commuters.

“To call this parking lot a ‘vacant lot’ is a blatant mischaracterization,” Yanni said. “It’s full nearly every single night. To describe it as ‘vacant’ is disrespectful



Yanni’s Bar & Grill relies not only on its 19 spaces for customers in one lot, but also on the 120 parking spaces in the nearby Park and Ride lot available to customers at 4 p.m. (photo by John Gregory)

to me and the community.”

The Mayor’s office contends that the Park and Ride property within the Scripps Ranch community was acquired by the City of San Diego and is not subject to the pre-existing CC&Rs for the Scripps Gateway Freeway Center. The Mayor’s office also said that the CC&Rs do not preclude the use of the City property for permanent supportive housing.

“The existence of our restaurant is based on our permits per the existence and our full access to the 120 parking spots of the Park and Ride,” Yanni countered. “How are we going to keep our business without access to parking if we only have 19 parking spots as opposed to 139?”

Available parking spaces are widely considered to be a key component of success for any restaurant.

“Parking is pivotal for the success of a restaurant and accessibility for customers and staff,” said Kristina Owenburg, manager of the San Diego Chapter of the California Restaurant Association.

Yanni immigrated to the United States from Greece in 1985. He said he arrived with nothing and was one of the few lucky ones to get a Green Card. He worked first



This substantial conformance review letter states that customers of the property may use the spaces at the Park & Ride after 4 p.m.

as a bus boy then a waiter, attended college and became a restaurant manager.

“All along, our goal was to have our own business,” he said.

“Yanni and I are not against this project and understand the necessity of supportive housing for at risk individuals in San Diego, especially for seniors and veterans,” Denise Pihass said. “However, this project would mean years of construction within the business center, which could result in the removal of the vast majority of parking spaces attached to our business.”

Yanni said that the City of San Diego has not shared any studies of the impact its proposed project will have for his restaurant, Scripps

Gateway Freeway Center and the community.

“As of now, we have not been provided with any information as to how many parking spots would remain,” he added.

A spokesman for the City said community input can be voiced when the proposal is presented to the Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee (MRNPC), which would be before the City Council considers a go-ahead vote early next year.

The MRNPC indicated the developer or applicant for the proposed project could present design plans for the public input process providing they are ready and comply with city policies. No presentation was confirmed as of press time. The next MRNPC meeting is scheduled for Dec. 1. Should the project applicant/developer make a presentation, the meeting would be held on Zoom, with a link posted on the city website 72 hours in advance.

The lack of commuter parking if the current Scripps Ranch Park and Ride lot is replaced by low-income housing, is an additional matter of concern.

According to Scott Robinson, senior public information officer for the City of San Diego, there are no current plans to replace the Scripps Ranch Park and Ride.

“The City Council will consider all options, including community input and parking options, when voting on the item early next year,” he said.

Might there be enough spillover parking in the Scripps Gateway Freeway Center and the two neighboring hotels to sustain business at Yanni’s Bar & Grill during construction?

“No,” Yanni said. “They don’t have enough parking for themselves. The hotels are often booked full and if every room is filled, it’s very tight.”

MK BAND

Continued from Page 5

performed more than 50 shows and 40 songs, and hope to do more.

“Our hope is that we are able to connect and reach out to more senior homes. Playing our music brings us joy and we want to share it with more people,” Devin said.


Not only are they involved in music, they participate in other organizations.

Sagey practices traditional Indian classical dance and is part of the organization

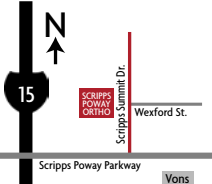
South Asian Culture Show (SACS). Devin and Ashay are involved in the League of Amazing Programmers. All three siblings have been practicing karate for around six years at Manna’s Martial Arts and soon will be testing for their black belts.

After each show, the band posts on its website to recap each performance. All of the songs they have performed are available on their YouTube channel.

For more information about the MK Band Project, visit themkbandproject.com.



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Kiwanis Club off to a good start

By Terry L. Wilson

One of the newest members in the Kiwanis Club family is the Scripps Ranch chapter. While not yet a year old, its members are already living up to the Kiwanis reputation as stewards of the community by embracing their motto: Improving the world one child and one community at a time.

'We are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work and start helping.'

—Holt Mebane

"We've only been around for a couple of months, and we're just getting our feet on the ground," said club President Holt Mebane. "One of the projects we've done was a voter registration drive, which was quite successful. Then our members organized and participated in a Park Clean-Up Day. On Nov. 20 we held our first big project – a fundraiser to benefit Rady Children's Hospital and other community programs in Scripps Ranch."

"This year, going into the holiday season with COVID being such a challenge for our health care institutions, the Kiwanis fundraiser was particularly appreciated and needed," said Alexandra Loker, senior director of philanthropy at Rady Children's Hospital. "The hospital has to be fully staffed to deal with this pandemic; we've had a very difficult year. So, we are very appreciative of what the Kiwanis are doing to help raise those needed funds at a critical time."

"The fundraiser was one of many such venues that we are looking forward to doing in the future," Mebane said. "The Rady event was done using Zoom. We charged \$20 per screen. The way it worked, people paid on our website, then an hour before the event, we mailed out a Zoom link to everyone who had registered. This worked out fine because the star of our event was an expert at performing using live streaming."

The headliner was magician Paul Draper, who has performed around the world and was a fixture at the Magic Castle in Los Angeles.

Draper, a pioneer in the field of live online magic shows, regularly does his act using Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic, making him the ideal person to star in this unique fundraiser.

"We also have two Key Clubs that we sponsor: the Scripps Ranch High School Key Club and the Mira Mesa High Key Club," Mebane said. "A Key Club is sort of the high school version of Kiwanis Club. ... There is a college version called Circle K. It's really been a pleasure working with the Key Clubs."

It is difficult enough to kick-start an organization like the Kiwanis on a good day, but when you add COVID-19 to the mix, the local Kiwanis president had to once again think outside the box. Mebane had to get creative.

"We've been meeting on Zoom and it's worked out pretty well so far," he said. "Of course, it's not as good as meeting in person because you can't connect on a personal level when everyone is on a separate TV monitor or computer. But with that said, people are enthusiastic and showing

up for meetings, and we are moving forward."

Still in the process of organizing the club, Mebane is focusing on letting everyone in Scripps Ranch know that Kiwanis is there to help the community, and all it takes to get the ball rolling is a phone call or an email.

"What we are trying to do now is to find out who needs our help. I've reached out to a few community leaders to build awareness of the club, not only to get additional members, but find out who needs our help and to find out what we can do for them," Mebane said. "Kiwanis is primarily focused on helping children, so we try to find projects for that agenda. It can be fundraising to come up with money to give an organization like Rady, or it can be constructing and building things. We are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work and start helping."

With a current cadre of 20 members, the Kiwanis Club of Scripps Ranch is looking to fill its ranks with a few civic-minded volunteers. If interested, email scrippsranchkiwanis@gmail.com.



Kiwanis Club of Scripps Ranch member Jim McGinn participates in a club trash pickup event along Pomerado Road. (courtesy of Kiwanis Club of Scripps Ranch)

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HOLIDAYS

Fun and cozy craft projects for fall

(StatePoint) Give your home a warm and cozy vibe this fall with a few DIY projects that are sure to add seasonal cheer to any space. Whether you're looking for a rainy-day activity to keep kids busy or searching for affordable décor options, these fall craft ideas are a great place to start. All you need is your creativity and a few supplies.

Celebrate fall foliage

Add fall flavor to a tabletop or mantel by filling mason jars with wheat and dried baby's breath flowers. Give the mason jar an elevated look by wrapping it with jute ribbon and lace. Or, you can simply roll coordinating scrapbooking paper into decorative cuffs that slip inside.

Give thanks

Banners are an easy way to make your own décor without spending a lot of money. DIY banners look great on a front porch to welcome guests or they can be used on a mantel. Easily create a banner with paper and duct tape. Write your own message or cut out shapes like leaves and pumpkins and attach them to twine or string.

Get cocoa cozy

Nothing is better on a crisp fall day than a cup of hot cider or cocoa. Make sure everyone in the family has their own customizable mug by using chalkboard paint. Use a quality painter's tape, such as Duck Clean Release

See **CRAFT PROJECTS**, Page 10



There's no time like the present to get crafty, so grab a cup of cider and schedule a fun family "crafternoon." (StatePoint)

Keep traditions alive this holiday season

(StatePoint) This holiday season may look a bit different due to social distancing, but just because everyone is not physically together, doesn't mean your family can't share its favorite traditions.

The Olesen family of O&H Danish Bakery knows how important holiday traditions are to feeling connected to loved ones. Now in its fourth generation, the family-owned and operated bakery is sharing its best tips for creating holiday cheer from anywhere:

- **Celebrate virtually:** In a survey commissioned by O&H Danish Bakery and conducted by SWNS Media Group and OnePoll, nearly 80 percent of respondents say time with family is their favorite part of the holiday season. Whether your tradition is a Christmas movie marathon, a caroling



This year might be especially difficult for families who are physically separated, but there are many ways to spread cheer and keep traditions alive.

session around the piano or eating certain foods and baked treats, you can enjoy these activities together over video chat this year.

- **Plan ahead:** When it comes to ordering gifts and specially baked treats, make sure to account for busy sched-

ules and congested delivery services to ensure all your goodies arrive on time. Take note of shipping times and policies, as well as ordering deadlines for each company.

- **Create hygge:** Evoking the sights, sounds and aromas of a typical holiday sea-

son will help make this year feel more cheerful. Take a cue from Danish culture and embrace hygge. Pronounced "hoo-ga," it means creating a cozy atmosphere and enjoying the good things in life, such as the warm glow of candlelight or a steaming cup of cocoa – and there is no better time of year to do it than the holiday season.

- **Share traditional foods:** The sensory memories that good food creates are powerful. In fact, 44 percent of people say the holiday spirit wouldn't be the same if they didn't have their traditional holiday dessert.

That favorite dessert might be Kringle, a traditional Danish treat made of 36 layers of butter and pastry. Among O&H's special holiday offerings are Thanksgiving Stuffed Kringle, A Very

See **TRADITIONS**, Page 10

Becky's Gift toy drive

Last year, with all the support of the Scripps Ranch community, local businesses, friends and families, Becky's Gift was able to surpass the goals and even added an extra cancer center to deliver toys to for the toy drive.

Becky's Gift allows families affected by cancer the chance to choose a gift for their children or grandchildren during the holidays

See **BECKY'S GIFT**, Page 10

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Dance studio: the show **must** go on

By Alex Piscatelli

One dance company is not letting COVID-19 stop it from letting its kids perform.

Lynch Dance Institute, owned by Scripps Ranch residents Alex Dickson and Tim Lynch, converted its studio into a black box theater and turned its annual Christmas show into a video production.

This year's Christmas performance is a production called "Nightmare Before Christmas."

Dickson said they normally do a performance called "Mixed Nuts," which is a coming-of-age show loosely based on "The Nutcracker."

"We all came to an agreement if we couldn't do 'Mixed Nuts' the way it's supposed to be done, then we didn't want to do it," Dickson said. "What we decided to do is just change gears completely and do a dance film instead."

They rented everything they needed to turn their studio into a black box the-



Lynch Dance Institute students performed in a holiday dance film titled "Nightmare Before Christmas." (photo by Mandy Santiago)

ater: a black drape, lights and more.

"We are building this whole shabang from the ground up," Dickson said.

Since the production is different from what they have done in previous years, there has been a learning curve.

"We just kind of figured it out as we went along," Dickson said. "It's not going to be like we're taping a recital. It's a dance film ... We're making the performance, dissecting it, shooting it and putting it all back together."

Dickson said it is hard-

er because of this, but the team at Lynch Dance Institute wanted to take on the challenge.

"We never look at what's easiest," Dickson said. "We look at what's going to suit the families and give the children what they need."

She said they knew they needed to do something for the souls of the kids.

"The kids have been dealing with a lot of stress and a lot of screen time ... We really felt like we needed to be a part of their joy and a little bit of saving grace," Dickson said. "How can we try to keep as much normal-



Lynch Dance Institute dancers surrounded the Christmas tree in the "Nightmare Before Christmas" film production. (photo by Mandy Santiago)

cy as possible when things are so abnormal?"

Thirty-three of the students in the performance are Scripps Ranch residents.

Despite the changes the kids have gone through in 2020, they're excited to be a part of the production.

"As a matter of fact, one of the kids said to me, 'I am more excited about this than I think I've ever been for any other performance,'" Dickson said. "I really think that's because of COVID ... They feel so grateful to be out of their houses and doing what they love."

Dickson said it would have been easy to cancel the show this year.

"We could easily have said we're doing nothing ... but the kids are our inspiration," she said.

Community is what keeps Dickson and the team at Lynch Dance Institute going.

"I think the people that we have the fortune to work with on a daily basis are really special, and the kids are such a joy to work with," Dickson said. "It's a tremendous amount of work, but we wouldn't trade it for anything."

REALLY



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Photos will be published in the December issue of Scripps Ranch News and also posted on ScrippsRanchNews.com.

- Email a high-resolution photo taken within the 92131 Zip Code area of Scripps Ranch in 2020 to info@scrippsranchnews.com
- Include the name and address of the photographer.
- Include the date and location photo was taken.
- No Photoshop or alterations allowed.
- Deadline: entries must be submitted by Dec. 1, 2020.

Send photos to info@scrippsranchnews.com.



BECKY'S GIFT

Continued from Page 8

while undergoing treatment. Becky's Gift helps make a difference to many families during the holiday season.

This is an emotionally, physically and financially stressful process for families. During the holidays, Becky's Gift helps relieve some of this stress. Patients can focus on getting healthy during this time.

These families have stated "Becky's Gift is truly a blessing at a time when cancer has taken over our family's life," and "Going through cancer, the focus has been all on me. It is nice that Becky's Gift is available to give my kids toys."

Becky's Gift delivers toys to five cancer centers in San Diego: UCSD Moores Cancer Center, UCSD Breast Cancer Center, Oncology Associates of San Diego, South County Hematology and Oncology Center and Sharp Reese Stealy Kevin H. Cook Infusion and Oncology Center starting Thanksgiving week.

Becky's Gift collects unwrapped new toys for children 1-16 years of age. Gift cards are also accepted.

Gifts can be dropped off at Scripps Rock Dental, 12112 Scripps Summit Drive, Suite C.; St. Gregory the



The annual Becky's Gift toy drive allows families affected by cancer the chance to choose a gift for their children or grandchildren during the holidays while undergoing treatment. (courtesy photo)

Great Catholic School, 15315 Stonebridge Parkway; or contact Christie Jackson at christie@jacksonlane.com or Becky Walton at beckywalton@san.rr.com and they will pick up the gifts.

View the Becky's Gift Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BeckysGift or visit beckysgifts.org.

For questions, contact Christie Jackson, christie@jacksonlane.com or Becky

Walton, beckywalton@san.rr.com.

CRAFT PROJECTS

Continued from Page 8

painter's tape, to create a crisp border. Then paint on a writable area. Remove the tape and bake the mug for a custom creation that can be personalized with names or festive phrases.

Craft a welcoming wreath

Wreaths are the ultimate seasonal décor item. They are perfect on the front door to welcome guests into your home or can be used to line interior windows for a festive feel. However, store-bought versions can be expensive. Test your crafting skills with a duct tape leaf masterpiece. All you have to do is create a variety of leaves in fall hues out of colored Duck Tape: make two of each leaf, then add wire to the sticky side of one of the leaves so it can easily be shaped, place the two leaves together and repeat the steps until you have your desired amount of leaves.

For more fall craft projects and DIY inspiration, visit duckbrand.com.

TRADITIONS

Continued from Page 8

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Words cannot express our sincere gratitude for the ongoing support from our community throughout this pandemic. We would not have survived without you! My team and I are even more committed to our mission to change lives and spread positivity to our community. I never thought that almost 21 years ago when I opened the doors at Fitness Quest 10 with no clients, no money, and no business plan that it would lead to what it is today. We are extremely blessed to play an integral part of your health, fitness, & happiness and we look forward to continuing to be the best part of your day, now more than ever!

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A FUN, FESTIVE HALLOWEEN

Scripps Ranch residents enjoyed a fun and festive Halloween in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. Readers sent in these photos of their costumes as they celebrated a safe All Hallows Eve.



Celine Esme Nguyen is ready for Halloween. (photo by Catherine Nguyen)



The Family of OZ! Catherine, Celine and Michael Nguyen (courtesy of Catherine Nguyen)

Left: Oliver Jude Nguyen is Captain America (photo by Catherine Nguyen)



Sawyer Fiero's first Halloween (left) and mother and son (right) – Darlene and Sawyer Fiero – dress as Corn and Baby Corn. (photos by Darlene and Arturo Fiero)



Chefs EJ, Aaron, and Judah Horton at the French Oven with Chef Yves. (photo by Shannon Horton)



Judah, EJ, and Aaron Horton as a giraffe, Minecraft creeper, and Bumblebee the Transformer. (photo by Shannon Horton)



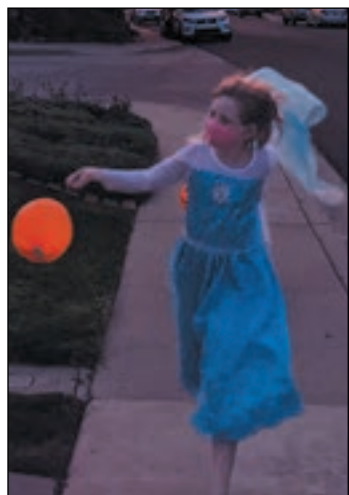
Oliver Jude Nguyen proudly demonstrates his DIY transforming Bumblebee Transformer halloween costume. (photo by Catherine Nguyen)



11 month old Terence Horton dressed as a pumpkin for his first Halloween. (photo by Shannon Horton)



Scott Gaffney and his son Rocco flex their muscles as Hulk Hogan and Hulk Superhero.



Lyra Meyer still enjoys the beautiful, eerie, masked loneliness of the night. (photo by Nicole Meyer)



Happy Halloween from the Schulze Family – Captain Hook, Wendy, Peter Pan and Tinker Bell. (photo by Heather Schulze)



Ava, Kaylin, and Emily Moritz are full of frights and delights during a fun-filled Halloween. (photo by Rachel Moritz)



Connor Battaglia and Gray Tillett (photo by Trisha Battaglia)



Chase Battaglia and Samantha Hasson (photo by Trisha Battaglia)



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Happy 9th birthday Callan!
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Happy 14th birthday Isabella!
We love you so much and are so proud of all you have accomplished and all you will accomplish in the future!!! Love, Araceli, Carlos, Sofia, Sugar & Jack!



Happy 4th Birthday to our first born, Jackson Fiero. You are loving, silly and energetic. We love you always and forever! Mama, Dadda and Saywer

If you know someone having a birthday in December, you can send a message and photo to Scripps Ranch News and we'll share it on the special day on our Facebook and Instagram pages – and publish it in the next issue of Scripps Ranch News. Send your birthday message (25 words maximum) along with a photo and the birthday date to info@scrippsranchnews.com.

Col. Robert Dingeman Drive

The City of San Diego honored the late Col. Robert Dingeman – known as “Mr. Scripps Ranch” because of his tireless work with the Scripps Ranch Civic Association – by naming a section of street in Scripps Ranch after him. The street sign reads “Col. Robert Dingeman Drive.” This honorary designation runs from Red Cedar Drive to Canyon Lake Dive. City Councilmember Mark Kersey presented the street sign to the community on Veterans Day. Dingeman’s wife, Gaye, was honored and pleased that a sign was placed near their former home.



Gaye Dingeman and City Councilman Mark Kersey celebrate the dedication of Col. Robert Dingeman Drive. (Courtesy of Council District 5)

Rotarians strive to ‘End Polio Now’

Last month several members of the Rotary Club of Poway-Scripps walked Miramar Lake to help raise money in honor of End Polio Now Day. One week later the Rotary Club of Poway-Scripps again helped mark World Polio Day (Oct. 24) on Oct. 31 by supporting several members and friends in a skydiving event.

Led by Don Glover, whose 80th birthday was also Oct. 31, nine people including Past District Governor Mike Stelman and three members from Rotary Club of Poway-Scripps jumped at the SkyDive San Diego Center in Otay Mesa.

More than 30 masked and socially distanced Rotarians and friends cheered them on while complying with all local regulations. All nine divers landed safely and had a great time in supporting this vitally important Rotary cause.

For more information on the Rotary Club of Poway-Scripps, visit the club webpage at powayscrippsrotary.org or send an email to contact@powayscrippsrotary@gmail.com.



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SPORTS

Seniors Corner: Missing social activities

By Ashley Shah

Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS) seniors share their thoughts during this time of distance learning and limited activities.



Luke Durkin
Captain of the varsity football team

"I miss playing in front of that crowd. It's always special running out on the field and I looked forward to that every week. I've looked forward to my senior football season since I was in middle school and I hope there is a chance that we are able to at least have some of the season," Durkin said.

The SRHS varsity football team was recently able to begin practicing.

"We are able to go to the

park and we are still socially distanced, but we have been able to practice as a team," Durkin said.

He is optimistic about virtual learning this year.

"Online teaching isn't the same, but we are trying to make the most out of it. I think everyone is really trying to work together and make this year the best it can be under these circumstances," Durkin said.

He committed to Davidson College to play Division I football and plans to study economics.



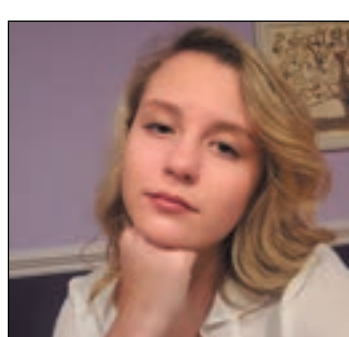
Ben Gietzen
Four-year cross country and track runner

"The fact that we are not able to come together as a school community for football or homecoming that would normally be around this time is really hard on us. There is just such a com-

munity at the games and now we're all just apart," Gietzen said.

He shared the positives and negatives he has experienced due to virtual learning.

"I think virtual learning helps with time management. It really comes down to you as the individual to work with the extra time we are given now. However, now that the school days are shorter, it leaves less time for instructors to teach and I really miss that because it gave more of a balanced schedule," Gietzen said.



Savannah Frost
Four-year marching band trombone player

"Attending the games and playing for the student section really makes you feel like you are a part of

something. Everyone at the games is always super nice and it's just fun to be in the moment and that's something I miss," Frost said.

She expressed her thoughts on the online school year.

"Having shorter school days is really nice. Being at home allows me to have more freedom and it's helped me out in the morning because I don't have to rush to school. However, it's a whole different experience in person that virtual can't capture and I miss the social aspect of that," Frost said.

Not only is Frost a part of the marching band at SRHS, but is in the concert band class, played in pep band, played in jazz band and played in several musicals.

She plans to attend a college that will have a marching and concert band, and she plans to study music.



Stevie Kreger
Four-year cheerleader and softball player

"Last year I was captain, and I was really looking forward to this year. Leading the team was super exciting last season and it was upsetting when we got our season taken away from us," Kreger said.

She explained her feelings about learning virtually this year.

"With distance learning there is no community with your friends or team. Now I'm getting a chance to notice the little things like walking around campus and just being in a classroom that we took for granted," Kreger said.

As a part of the softball team, Kreger conveyed her loss for that season as well.

"We won CIF last year, so I was looking forward to doing that again this year. It was my last season and I was really pumped because your senior season is something you always look forward to," Kreger said.

Outside of SRHS, Kreger is involved with organizations at her church, has a job at Hollister and plays travel softball.

Kreger plans to study psychology at a four-year university.

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and search for Scripps Ranch News.

Dear Scripps Ranch, we are grateful for all your support during the pandemic & for your positive response to our quest to save our restaurant.



Please help us save the 120 parking spots vital for our small business & our employees.

Mayor Kevin Faulconer has approved the development of the current Park & Ride lot adjacent to Yanni's Bar & Grill for Permanent Supportive Housing. If approved by the City Council, it will be built **ON** the 120 parking spaces adjacent to our restaurant that are vital for our small business.

We are respectfully asking the Mayor & City Council to include parking as part of the housing project and **replace the 120 spots they are taking away.**



- Yanni's Bar & Grill fully supports the need for supportive housing for at risk individuals especially seniors and veterans. We have made numerous pleas with the city to include parking in the new development. If the 120 Park & Ride spaces are removed then Yanni's Bar & Grill will only have 19 parking spaces in the close vicinity for our guests and employees. That will destroy our restaurant's viability.
- The 120 parking spaces of the Park & Ride lot were included in the Master Parking Plan of the Scripps Gateway Center and have been maintained by all the business owners. Yanni's Bar & Grill was permitted by the city from retail to restaurant use in 2004 based on the access to the Park & Ride parking spots. A Substantial Conformance Review allows the restaurant to use the Park & Ride lot after 4pm weekdays and all day on the weekends.
- Please contact our city officials with the request to replace the 120 parking spaces as part of the housing project plus adding parking for the facility needs. If the parking is not replaced the livelihood of our employees and our business will face certain demise. *Please share this with anyone who you believe might be supportive in our quest to save our restaurant.

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BAR & GRILL

Please help us save the 120 parking spots vital for our business & our employees.
For more information contact Denise at dpihas@gmail.com.

We would like to extend our gratitude to **Bob Ilko** for his leadership & guidance in our quest to save our small business and the 50 jobs of our employees that are on the line.

SRHS club helps the homeless

By Nick Ng

Many Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS) students will continue a nine-year-long tradition of aiding San Diego's homeless this holiday season. With the help of the SRHS Homeless Outreach Club, students will be donating new clothing and other necessities through a network of collection boxes this holiday season.

Blake Scurry, who is the club's president and a SRHS student, said that they are currently donating more than 800 pairs of socks to various homeless shelters.

"We are planning to donate 100 hygiene kits and hand-written messages of hope to a San Diego homeless shelter," Scurry said.

With the help of the club adviser Ron Tsui, the Outreach Club is a student-run volunteer organization that raises awareness about the homelessness problem in San Diego. It was started in late 2011 by former SRHS students Nicolas Stanitsas and Daniel Miller. Stanitsas started a sock drive for the homeless in the fall of 2011. He later met Miller,



Members of the 2019 SRHS Homeless Outreach Club. (courtesy photo)

who shared the same vision as his. So, they tag-teamed to promote an event called "Christmas Socks for the Homeless" that year in which they collected more than 800 pairs of athletic socks – just like the current project.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic had set back some of the Outreach Club's events, it did not prevent people from donating for the next event.

"Luckily, we have already received donations for hygiene kits from the members of our community," Scurry

said. "Scripps Ranch has always been known for its kindness and generosity."

In April 2020, the U.S. Census reported that there were nearly 4,900 people who were homeless in the City of San Diego, a drop of 4 percent from last year, according to SanDiego.gov. Many are being temporarily sheltered inside the San Diego Convention Center. While city officials are working on a long-term plan to address homelessness, volunteer programs like the SRHS Homeless Outreach Club offer some comfort and short-term solutions.

"Just like the founders' goal of raising awareness of homelessness, we are hoping to provide aid to those in need and give a spark of hope in their lives," Scurry said.

All Scripps Ranch High students are welcome to join. Email the Outreach Club: srhshomelessoutreach@gmail.com.

QUINCY

Continued from Page 1

can't do that.' I want a dog that isn't just another pretty face, he must be smart and he must pick me too," Beisel said.

"I began working with Susan Cook, who primarily sells hunting dogs known for having a good nose, and that's very important because how the dog signals me is by scent," Beisel explained.

"My body chemistry changes and that is how the dog knows to alert. I knew Quincy was the one when instead of running off with his siblings to play, he snuggled up to me and put his head on my lap."

Service dogs have a lot of rules to follow; subsequently not every pooch is cut out for the job. Poodles can be very high-spirited, but Quincy was the exception, being a very mellow and stable dog.

"Quincy is not allowed to bark unless it's to alert me," Beisel said. "He cannot have any prey drive ... and when we're working, if a squirrel, bunny or cat is near, Quincy isn't even allowed to recognize them. He cannot be distracted because it puts me at risk."

To learn all these new behaviors, Quincy went to school at Golden State Service Dogs in Chula Vista. Beisel and her new companion trained side-by-side, attending classes once a week and weekends for two years.

"At the end of this process I had to log 200 active training hours, so Quincy has his own Instagram account," Beisel

said. "Quincy also had to pass multiple tests before he would receive his official Golden State Service Dog vest. The vest is like a diploma verifying that he has reached national accreditation. So, wherever I go Quincy is registered with the Humane Society – a large gold coin on his collar certifies that he's nationally accredited."

To keep the vest, Quincy must do an additional 100 hours that are documented in writing and photos that are posted on his Instagram page.

"Right now, the COVID has us doing remote teaching. But when I take Quincy to class he has a crate and he has a bed on opposite sides of my desk, and he knows that is where he must stay unless it's to signal me. If there is a problem, Quincy will signal me by barking or by striking me with his paw," Beisel said.

"I explain to the kids that when Quincy is wearing his vest, he knows he's working; but when I take it off he runs around the classroom like the village idiot. He knows it's playtime, Beisel added. "Once a month (before COVID-19) we have, 'Touch Me Tuesday' and 'Freedom Friday,' and allow the kids to pet and play with Quincy. They absolutely love him."

Because Beisel teaches and enjoys science, she named her canine sidekick after the popular 1970s TV show "Quincy, M.E." featuring a Los Angeles medical examiner (played by Jack Klugman) who utilizes science to help solve police investigations.



Susan Beisel and Quincy, her service dog. (photo courtesy of Susan Beisel)

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When it comes to creating a healthy home sanctuary, taking steps to manage the most common indoor air pollutants should be a top priority. (Interior by Lisa Tharp. Photo by Michael J. Lee)

Improve indoor air quality

(StatePoint) With more of life centered at home due to cool weather and social distancing, it's time to ensure the space where your family spends the majority of its time is healthy and safe.

What many people don't know is that concentrations of air pollutants can typically be up to five times higher inside one's home than out, and sometimes far more, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. However, there are many simple actions you can take to breathe better in your home:

Monitor carbon monoxide

This potentially deadly gas can be emitted by a faulty gas-burning home appliance. Monitor for carbon monoxide using detectors placed in major areas of the home, especially the bedrooms.

Make the switch to VOC-free

Most paints and stains, along with aerosol sprays, air fresheners and other household products, contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which emit gases that can result in respira-

tory problems, headaches and irritation to the eyes, nose and throat, among other health problems. Take a cue from forward-thinking institutions like the Getty Museum and Google, and swap out conventional paints in your home interiors for an eco-friendly, non-toxic alternative such as ECOS Paints. The brand, which has a 35-year history of offering VOC- and odor-free paints and stains in virtually any color, uses sustainable ingredients and can deliver directly to a home or business. To learn more, visit ecospaints.net.

"We want people to feel good about what they are bringing into their homes. This is why we are transparent about ingredients and VOC testing results," said Julian Crawford, ECOS Paints CEO.

Keep airborne dust to a minimum

Dust carries a variety of contaminants, including bacteria and allergens. Mop and dust often using a wet mop and dust cloth. Vacuum often as well using a vacuum with a HEPA filter,

which traps small particles.

Eliminate moisture from the air

Moisture promotes mold, which can cause serious health problems when left unabated. Reduce moisture by eliminating sources of water leaks, installing exhaust fans in kitchens, using air conditioning and positioning dehumidifiers in high-moisture rooms such as bathrooms, laundry rooms and basements.

Reduce airborne particles

Install an air purifier to trap irritating particles, including mold, pollen and pet dander, which are particularly bad for people with respiratory problems like asthma. Brush pets often – outdoors if possible – and give pets regular baths.

Decrease dirty air

Replace HVAC filters regularly. While the optimal frequency that you perform this task depends on the type of filter, the number of pets at home and other factors – a good reference point is the manufacturer's guidelines.



Should I Sell My Home During the Holidays?

Winter is typically a slower season in real estate – but 2020 is poised to be different. Low inventory, high buyer demand and record-low interest rates are setting up this winter season to be one of the best seller's markets in recent history – and if you're thinking about selling your home, now is a great time to make a move.

Here are a few tips for taking advantage of this historic market.

Price right.

Typically, you don't want to price your home too high, but in a market like this, there is more leeway for you to list on the higher end of the price range. The low inventory, high demand, and low interest rates make a buyer feel fine about paying a bit more for a house. We are also finding that there is a sweet spot to pricing in order to get multiple offers on your home quickly.

Offer a variety of options for seeing the home.

A lot of buyers are still hesitant to go tour homes in person – so, if you want your home to sell quickly and profitably, make it easy for buyers to tour your home without having to step foot inside. Virtual tours, live tours or recorded tours are great ways to allow buyers to get a feel for your home while still social distancing – and are an essential selling tool during these odd times.

Don't accept an offer too quickly.

In today's market, many homes are getting multiple offers – don't jump on the first offer you receive and say "yes" to the first before additional offers come in. Owners typically have 24 to 48 hours to respond to an offer, so give yourself plenty of time to consider the offer, allow any other offers to roll in in that time, and make the best (and most profitable) decision for your home sale.

Now, more than ever, demanding timelines make it essential to have experts on your side with a team of experienced agents with all of the connections to get your home closed on time.

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Add lighting to your holiday wish list

(StatePoint) Spending more time at home working, learning and simply living? The holiday season is the perfect opportunity to gift your household with lighting that enhances the feel and function of your spaces.

To take advantage of the best deals of the season, create your “lighting wish-list” in advance of Cyber Monday. Manufacturers such as Progress Lighting are mak-

ing it easy to plan ahead. As you seek inspiration, consider these designs, which align with the latest home decor trends:

- **Bath and vanity:** Create a serene bathroom oasis capturing the old and the new. Featuring a clean, precise design, the Hansford Collection’s four-light bath and vanity bracket with an Antique Bronze finish lends itself to farmhouse, coastal

or industrial interiors. For a modern, yet timeless look, consider the Carisa Collection’s three-light Vintage Gold Bath light. Its metallic finish supports glossy white glass globes.

- **Ceiling fans:** Add expansive design to great rooms, living rooms and bedrooms with statement-making ceiling fans. The Springer Collection 60-inch, 12-blade Distressed Walnut Coastal Windmill fan, inspired by the form and function of a windmill, has an architectural bronze finish ideal for farmhouse, industrial and transitional interior settings. For sophisticated, modern design, consider the Glandon Collection 60-inch fan, which has full-range dimming and reversible blades in driftwood and walnut.

- **Chandeliers:** Complement rustic and modern farmhouse home décor in hallways, foyers and great rooms, as well as urban industrial and coastal interior settings, with the four-light linear chandelier of the Gulliver Collection. Its three circular bands wrap together for an open design. Dual-toned frame color combinations of graphite feature weathered gray accents. Or create a soft, muted glow with the four-light black chandelier in the Durrell Collection. Inside the sailcloth linen shade nestle light bases on gently curved arms coated in a beautiful finish.

Demand attention with the Lassiter Five-Light Brushed Nickel Chandelier. Square tubing with clean angles and striking vintage light sockets blend the modern with traditional.

- **Close-to-ceiling:** A new category of vintage modern fixtures takes center stage



By upgrading home lighting during the holidays, you can affordably gift your family beautiful, functional spaces. Take advantage of deals to upgrade lighting this season. (StatePoint)

with this convertible fixture in the Debut Collection. Delicate details in a graphite finish create a statement-making focal piece for a variety of interiors – whether mounted flush to the ceiling or chain-hung – for a fitting stage to feature nostalgic, vintage lamps. For rustic flair, consider a close-to-ceiling fixture in the Durrell Collection featuring a round open-cage frame coated in a farmhouse-style matte black finish.

- **Outdoor:** Enhance modern and transitional style settings outdoors with the minimalist, yet exciting design of the Square Wall Lantern. The crisscross design of the Hollingsworth Collection Wall Lantern surrounds clear seeded glass, emulating popular farm-

house décor and – when paired with vintage or traditional bulbs – enhances a variety of transitional exteriors.

- **Pendants:** The concentric rings of Equinox pendants pivot for an otherworldly feel inspired by astronomy; whereas Penn – a one-light large pendant with a clear glass sphere in a natural brass finish – embraces a modern take on vintage electric design.

- **Controls:** Experience the convenience of touchless lighting with voice control through Siri, Amazon Alexa, or the Google Assistant using the iDevices Smart Lighting Controls. Manage home lighting from anywhere and set dynamic scenes via the connected app.



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Ensure heating equipment works efficiently

(StatePoint) Want a snafu-free season of home heating? Better installation and quality service mean a longer life for your heating and cooling equipment, as well as increased energy efficiency and reduced energy bills. Not only that, regular service checks may detect problems before you notice them, and catching them in time may extend your unit's life.

So, what should you know before hiring a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) professional for your installation, repair or maintenance check? Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Ask for credentials

Make sure the contractor has all the necessary permits to do the job. Find out whether they have experience with the maintenance, repair, or replacement of your existing system to prevent future misunderstandings or technical problems.

Ask for guidance

In the long run, knowing how to service the system yourself will save you a considerable amount of money, making a good contractor one who will be there to guide you through the maintenance process.

Hire carefully

Be careful of the lowest bidder. Contractors who are charging more may be doing so because they are better qualified. You should read company reviews as well as ask the contractor if they have technicians certified by North American Technician Excellence (NATE). NATE-certified technicians have demonstrated their knowledge of today's increasingly sophisticated heating and cooling systems by passing a nationally rec-



For smooth, efficient operation of your home heating equipment and a more comfortable winter, be sure any service rendered is carried out by qualified professionals. (copyright Aleksandr Zhurilo/iStock via Getty Images Plus)

ognized test developed and supported by all segments of the HVAC industry. To find a NATE-certified technician in your area, visit Natex.org.

Take precautions

With a few precautions, you can safely hire an HVAC technician and have home repair work done during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just be sure to ask the contractor about their safety protocols. For example, do they do video conferencing for estimates? Do their techs wear masks, gloves and shoe covers on the job? Are they practicing social distancing?

Make smart upgrades

Newer units, especially those with Energy Star labels, operate more efficient-

ly, reduce your energy bill, increase your comfort and even help protect the environment. You may not realize the amount of money you waste with a unit that is less efficient by today's standards, even if your heating or cooling system is properly maintained. Consider the age of your unit and think about updating older equipment for long-term savings.

DIY these tasks

While a qualified professional is a good choice for complicated maintenance tasks, there are a few things you can do to optimize your system's efficiency on your own. This includes changing your air filters at least twice in the season or as directed by the manufacturer. You

should also inspect your furnace area as well as all vents and returns to ensure they are free of obstructions.

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