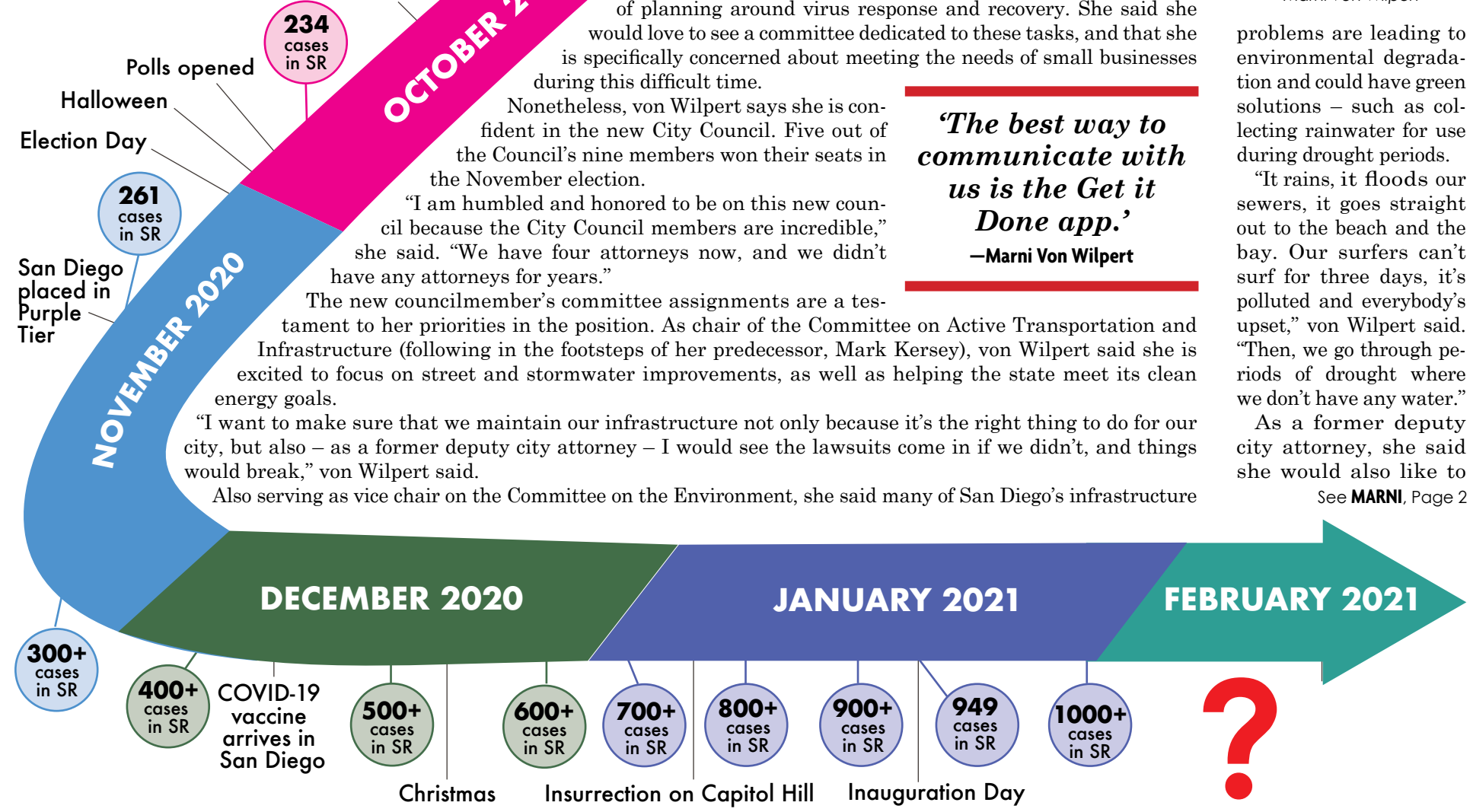


THE LONG ROAD

Congratulations! If you are reading this, you have lived through an incredibly historic year. Events were dominated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the road to recovery is long. This timeline contains facts that provide perspective, with emphasis on local milestones.



Marni takes her seat

By Bella Ross



Marni von Wilpert

Organizing a strong response to COVID-19, solidifying public safety services and taking a hard look at infrastructure are all at the top of Marni von Wilpert's agenda heading into her first months on the San Diego City Council. A Scripps Rancher since birth, von Wilpert knows a thing or two about how things run in her suburban corner of the city, otherwise known as District 5.

Beginning her term in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, von Wilpert said she was shocked by the Council's lack of planning around virus response and recovery. She said she would love to see a committee dedicated to these tasks, and that she is specifically concerned about meeting the needs of small businesses during this difficult time.

Nonetheless, von Wilpert says she is confident in the new City Council. Five out of the Council's nine members won their seats in the November election.

"I am humbled and honored to be on this new council because the City Council members are incredible," she said. "We have four attorneys now, and we didn't have any attorneys for years."

The new councilmember's committee assignments are a testament to her priorities in the position. As chair of the Committee on Active Transportation and Infrastructure (following in the footsteps of her predecessor, Mark Kersey), von Wilpert said she is excited to focus on street and stormwater improvements, as well as helping the state meet its clean energy goals.

"I want to make sure that we maintain our infrastructure not only because it's the right thing to do for our city, but also – as a former deputy city attorney – I would see the lawsuits come in if we didn't, and things would break," von Wilpert said.

Also serving as vice chair on the Committee on the Environment, she said many of San Diego's infrastructure

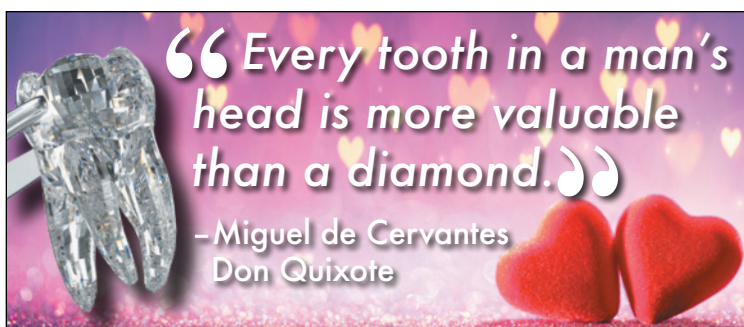
'The best way to communicate with us is the Get it Done app.'
—Marni Von Wilpert

problems are leading to environmental degradation and could have green solutions – such as collecting rainwater for use during drought periods.

"It rains, it floods our sewers, it goes straight out to the beach and the bay. Our surfers can't surf for three days, it's polluted and everybody's upset," von Wilpert said. "Then, we go through periods of drought where we don't have any water."

As a former deputy city attorney, she said she would also like to

See **MARNI**, Page 2



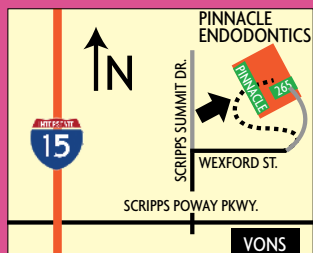
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MARNI

Continued from Page 1

see more of a focus on public safety – specifically, wildfire prevention and planning.

The councilmember also said she is hoping to work with Scripps Ranch organizations to ensure the roll out and effects of the city's pure water initiatives, which will entail construction at Miramar Reservoir, are well communicated to residents.

Von Wilpert's commitment to addressing these close-to-home issues, such as street repairs and wildfire safety, is derived from a deep passion for public service and her roots in the community.

"In Girl Scouts, we were taught every weekend to go do a community clean-up or bring meals and breakfast to homeless people," she said. "We're just looking out for each other. So, the Scripps Ranch community really raised me in a way that guided me toward public service."

Von Wilpert encourages residents to let her office know what needs attention in her district.

"The best way to communicate with us is the Get it Done app. It's an app you can download on your



District 5 City Councilperson Marni von Wilpert

smartphone, and it allows you to take a picture of the issue if it's a pothole or any other maintenance issue. Let us know," she said. "You can also follow up with our office. Once an app report is lodged ... that creates a record and then you can call our office and say, 'Hey, I put this in the Get it Done app.' We had a streetlight issue out the other day, and

somebody called in and our community representative was able to follow up and get it done. So, please do continue to use that."

With budget conversations beginning for fiscal year 2021-22, von Wilpert asks that residents consider sharing what they would like to see in the City's next financial plan. For more information, visit sandiego.gov/citycouncil/cd5.

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VOSR looks for ideas for \$400k

By Hoyt Smith

A Scripps Ranch nonprofit organization finds itself with \$400,000 to distribute to local community projects.

Voice of Scripps Ranch (VOSR) filed a lawsuit in January 2020 aimed at blocking a major housing development on seven acres of San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) property at 10380 Spring Canyon Road – the former site of Innovations Academy.

While the organization didn't ultimately prevent construction of the development, it settled the lawsuit in June 2020. The developers agreed to pay \$575,000 to Voice of Scripps Ranch, without admitting any liability, in exchange for dismissal of the litigation.

The first distribution was directed to mostly go toward attorney and legal fees, leaving VOSR with about \$400,000 which must be "reasonably used in a manner consistent with the nonprofit and public purposes required of a qualified 501(c)(3)," according to the settlement agreement.

VOSR states that it is a voice for reasonable and responsible development in Scripps Ranch and the greater San Diego area, according to its website and Facebook page.

The organization opposed the 264-unit mixed use joint occupancy apartment complex and student makerspace proposed to replace Innovations Academy, a K-8 public charter school located at the intersection of Scripps Poway Parkway and Spring Canyon Road.

VOSR took the matter to court early last year, after the City of San Diego approved the 300,000 square-foot project. Under terms of the settlement, the apartment project will proceed as planned, but according to VOSR founding president Lorayne Burley, "We now have over \$400,000 to be spent for the community's benefit."

Burley said she started the organization with co-founder Emily Dressler, who has since moved to Germany.

"It's been five years," said Burley, a retired software engineer who has been a Scripps Ranch resident for 23 years and has raised three children in Scripps Ranch schools.

She added that Dressler, Burley's former neighbor,



Voice of Scripps Ranch attempted to block construction of a 264-unit mixed use joint occupancy apartment complex at 10380 Spring Canyon Road. (photo by Jacqueline Gregory)

was a retired district attorney from Chicago.

Other Scripps Ranch residents joined them in their efforts to oppose the conversion of Innovations Academy into high-density housing.

"It was a grassroots movement, and as our numbers grew, we became a large voice," Burley said.

Using the Miramar Ranch North Community Plan as its compass and aligning with its prescribed vision for the area known in the community plan as the Cypress Canyon Greenway, VOSR has advocated for commu-

nity input and negotiation in determining community land use. Burley and her board of directors envision themselves as "a voice at the table" for neighbors who would be most impacted by the SDUSD development.

"We are currently a board of five," Burley said.

Members include Burley, Lisa Croner, Peter Bonavich, Shay Schweinfurter and Jean Feinstein. Croner, the organization's secretary, is a computational biologist who has lived in Scripps Ranch for 20 years. Her child attended Scripps Ranch pub-

lic schools. Bonavich, the VOSR treasurer, is a retired attorney from Illinois who has lived in Scripps Ranch since 2001. His child also attended Scripps Ranch schools. Schweinfurter has a background in media relations and has a son enrolled in a Scripps Ranch school. Feinstein is a retired teacher who taught in Wisconsin, Alabama and – for her final 10 years – in San Diego.

VOSR secured its non-profit status in July, receiving official confirmation in a letter from the Internal Revenue Service, according to Burley.

Regarding details about the lawsuit settlement, she said, "I am not allowed, per agreement, to discuss that, but we believe (the settlement) was the best possible outcome we could achieve at the time, providing the best recourse for the community."

VOSR is gathering input from the public to determine how best to spend the \$400,000-plus in settlement funds for the community's benefit, Burley said.

"We've collected ideas and we're in the process of eval-

See **VOSR**, Page 4

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Support for caregivers of vets

By Nick Ng

When some military veterans return home from service, they may have trouble adapting to a normal civilian life. Oftentimes, symptoms of physical and mental health problems emerge after their homecoming that prevent them from getting a job or taking care of themselves. Their care falls onto the shoulders of a family member, spouse or partner who becomes the veteran's primary caregiver.

"When I was caregiving, that's exactly what happened. I forgot to take care of myself," said Brittany Fuller, a realtor and native Scripps Ranch resident. "Everything was prioritized in a way that my care was last on the list."

Fuller has been reaching out to residents who are such caregivers of disabled veterans. She is an advocate for the Southern Caregiver Resource Center (SCRC) where she had participated in one of the programs in 2019.

"A lot of the people whom we work with are caregiv-

ers who are caring for people with memory issues like dementia, Alzheimer's and memory loss," Fuller said. "That can be very taxing on the caregiver. Memory loss can come along with TBI – traumatic brain injury – or PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder), and caregivers often don't know what to expect."

The SCRC is a non-profit that provides free services such as support groups, counseling and respite care to caregivers of disabled adults in San Diego and Imperial counties. Operation Family Caregiver (OFC) is one of the programs that Fuller attended that focuses on caregivers of military vets.

"This is the program that changed my life," Fuller said. "We work with active duty and veterans, and it is confidential and free."

The OFC is in partnership with the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers, which was founded in 1987 in honor of the former First Lady who is currently the president of its board of directors. It offers one-on-one coaching for about 20 minutes on the

phone for caregivers.

Ever since she completed the OFC program in August 2019, Fuller reached out to caregivers virtually not only in California, but also in Arizona, Florida, Hawaii and Samoa. If they are interested, Fuller refers them to coaches at OFC who are licensed social workers.



Brittany Fuller

"I think it's easier to deny the needs of your own because you don't see them as well as other people's needs. Before you know it, your needs go to the bottom. That's when things get really heavy," Fuller said. "It's so important to take care of yourself so you can take care of others. Your value is so much more than what you're able to see."

Fuller will share her story in an upcoming OFC conference on March 3, at 11 a.m. via Zoom. Caregivers can sign up at bit.ly/2LL9kcU.

To donate, email Brittany Fuller: brittany@247realty.com.

For more information about the nonprofits, visit [SCRC at caregivercenter.org](https://www.caregivercenter.org) and [OFC at operationfamilycaregiver.org](https://www.operationfamilycaregiver.org).

Rotary Club sets blood drive

The new year is off and running with good deeds to be done as the Rotary Club of Poway-Scripps and the San Diego Blood Bank team up to hold their second blood drive.

The event will take place Feb. 24 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the "new Vons" parking lot at 10675 Scripps Poway Parkway. The public is invited to participate by scheduling an appointment at sandiegobloodbank.org/donate or by calling (619) 400-8251. Appointments are mandatory and donors will need to bring a photo ID.

Efforts from this blood drive aid the San Diego Blood Bank which must collect more than 350 units of blood each day to meet the needs of patients who are battling life-threatening blood disorders and cancers, suffering from trauma like burns or accidents, and even complications from childbirth. One pint of blood can save up to three lives.

In 2020 the Rotary Club donated funds to Pomerado Hospital to help the emergency personnel, donated to Interfaith Community Services, SD Fire Rescue to assist first responders and do-

nated \$1,000 to the Shelter Box disaster relief charity to assist families in emergency areas. A shelter box contains a family size tent specially designed to withstand the elements and provide people with temporary shelter until they can start the process of rebuilding a home lost due to an emergency situation. The signature green boxes feature a Rotary Club logo and are adapted to fit the emergency before being transported on scant notice.

The Rotary Club of Poway Scripps is selling American made U.S. flags to help raise money for these projects. To order a flag call Dan at (858) 240-6853.

Rotary Zoom meetings are held on Wednesdays at noon. To join the meeting, call Dave at (619) 602-3078 or email contact@poway-scrippsrotary.org.

VOSR

Continued from Page 3

uating them to see which ones are suitable," she said. "Some of them are doable and others are not. Any spending will have to be approved by the VOSR board."

VOSR has no immediate plans for upcoming events due to the global pandemic.

"With the COVID-19 pandemic, we haven't been able to have any meetings," Burley said. "It was great when we could meet with neighbors and discuss various issues, but right now it's kind of hard to get public input."

In lieu of meetings, Burley suggested that residents can email VOSR to ask questions, share concerns or suggest ideas.

"We also encourage people to visit our web site and join our mailing list," she said.

For more information, visit [voiceofscrippsranchnews.com](https://www.voiceofscrippsranchnews.com).

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The Scripps Ranch Welcome Club crafts group display their fall decorations in 1983. (SR Welcome Club photo)



Club members show their enthusiasm for Welcome Club activities in 2008. (SR Welcome Club photo)



Scripps Ranch Welcome Club members gather for tea in 2018. (SR Welcome Club photo)

SR Welcome Club zooms into 40th year

By Denise Stewart

What began in Scripps Ranch in 1981 as a way to meet new neighbors is now celebrating 40 years of enduring friendships.

According to Becky McDonald, the Scripps Ranch Welcome Club's founder, the original group had 12 members who met regularly to share games, crafts, coffees and luncheons. Occasionally, there were mom and tot activities and couples' dining. Starting out back then as the Welcome Wagon, the group subsequently abandoned the "wagon" and has

become a thriving club of 130 members.

"We are still going strong and making more wonderful memories," McDonald observed.

The Welcome Club that began in '81 has evolved through the years and is currently initiating some significant adaptations to fit the COVID-19 era.

Facing the realities of the COVID-19 epidemic has altered the club's social calendar significantly, according to the current President JoAnn Farmen.

"We miss the togetherness that is such a significant part of our club's identity, but we are making plans for

smaller virtual gatherings that will support our relationships within our group until the current situation is over," Farmen explained.

"The Welcome Club has purchased a Zoom account that will facilitate not only club business meetings, but coffee, lunch and evening gatherings to keep the members' relationships thriving. We are currently setting up the systems that will support these social gatherings while we remain safe," she explained.

Even though 2020 did not permit meetings and social events, members' loyalty to the Welcome Club motivat-

See **WELCOME CLUB**, Page 6



The original Scripps Ranch Welcome Club officers in 1981 (known as Welcome Wagon at the time) were First VP Janice Cooper, Secretary Nancy Steddum, second VP Vickie Unruh, President Ann Rose and Treasurer Tory Elshove. (SR Welcome Club photo)

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Group collects essential items for students

By Ashley Shah

Kylie Bach and Madhavi Akella, both juniors at Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS), have begun helping the community in many different ways.

“Nobody should ever have to worry about how they will get their next meal, access sanitary products or where they will sleep at night. Covers for Lives works to have less members of our community ask those questions,” Akella said.

In March of 2020, at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, Bach and Akella held their first drive which included gathering hand sanitizer, food, bottled water and masks. All the items gathered were donated to Father Joe’s Village.

“We really wanted to give back in a time of need. We saw a part of our community that needed support. During our drive in March, we made over 250 homemade masks. We also shifted our focus to sanitary products because they were expensive and in high demand,” Akella said.



Candace Gyure (left), the head nurse at Hoover High School, is pictured next to Kylie Bach with a load of items ready for delivery. (courtesy photo)

In July of 2020, they held another drive for essential items. These items included food, hand sanitizers and masks which were collected and donated to Father Joe’s Village.

“We were able to raise over \$270 from this drive. We also gathered around 130 cans, 450 masks, 300 gloves and over 1,000 sanitary products,” Akella said.

In September 2020, the team learned about difficulties that San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) was facing.

“School districts have to provide sanitary products for students who attend

schools that meet the 40 percent poverty threshold. We learned that a lot of school districts, especially SDUSD, were having a hard time providing those sanitary products for those students – and we wanted to help,” Akella said.

As a result, Covers for Lives partnered with five other schools – Francis Parker Upper School, Bishops High School, Patrick Henry High School, Academy of Our Lady of Peace and University City High School – to hold a menstrual products drive in November of 2020.

“The drive in November was for the 8,000 students

who are classified as homeless and thousands more who are classified as low income in the SDUSD. We were able to collect 20,500 pads and tampons for these students. This donation was the largest donation that the SDUSD has received during this time,” Akella said.

Covers for Lives partnered with Letters of Light, a club at SRHS, to put together care kits for foster kids in December 2020. The care kits included essential items such as lotion, wipes, toothpaste and toothbrushes.

“We donated 30 care kits to Olive Crest (foster family organization) and 70 care kits to the SDUSD to give to their homeless students,” Akella said.

Their most recent and on-going project is an essential items drive for the homeless and low-income students in the SDUSD. This drive will end on Feb. 15.

They are only accepting Venmo donations for this drive: @coversforlives.

“We are going to buy essential items such as toothpaste and toothbrushes for these students. We use the dona-

tions to buy these items in bulk quantities,” Akella said.

Besides being an organization, Covers for Lives is also a club at SRHS that has more than 30 members.

At SRHS, Akella is a part of the Peer Tutoring club and the Mock Trial club. Outside of school, she is an ambassador for The Pad Project and volunteers for The Alzheimer’s Project.

“The biggest goal this year is honestly to help as many people as possible. We want to really explore the impact that a group of high schoolers can have on their community,” Akella said.

Outside of Covers for Lives, Bach is a Red Cross Youth Volunteer and represents the Red Cross Club at SRHS as outreach chair. At SRHS, she is also part of the Peer Tutoring club and an event coordinator for the Girl Up club.

“We hope to further our relationship with the SDUSD and continue to keep working with them. Another thing we hope to do is to further the involvement of our club members in planning fundraisers and projects,” Bach said.

For more information, visit coversforlives.wixsite.com/coversforlives.



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WELCOME CLUB

Continued from Page 5

ed them to pay their annual dues and to wait impatiently for the fun to resume. Without any significant expenses for the year, the Welcome Club board voted recently to renew all current memberships without any payment of dues for 2021.

The board and activity chairs are planning to rejuvenate the traditional social schedule of live gatherings as soon as such events are deemed safe and responsible. A catered celebration of the Welcome Club’s 40th Anniversary will highlight the agenda that should be possible later in the year.

The Bunco groups, trail walkers and movie goers are still on hiatus waiting for the inoculations to roll out, but the Zoom events will help to liven up the COVID calendar.

“Meanwhile, members can keep the warmth of friendships alive and have some fun over the internet,” Farmer said. “It will be a celebration when we all welcome one another in person again.”

Visit scrippsranchwelcomclub.com.

Maya's cookies are irresistible

By Bella Ross

In 2015, Scripps Ranch resident Maya Madsen was baking 20 dozen batches of her specialty vegan cookies in her home kitchen every week.

The nutrition buff and fitness instructor was driven by more than just her sweet tooth: Madsen had two sons in college that year. Plus, making food always made her happy.

"The way that I share my love is through feeding people," Madsen said.

That year, when it became clear her operation had outgrown her kitchen, Madsen founded Maya's Cookies. Five years later, in 2020, her locally grown business was titled America's #1 Black-Owned Vegan Cookie Company.

The company, which got its start in local farmers markets, found success during a time when many small businesses were experiencing the exact opposite. Madsen said the pandemic came with a modest increase in sales thanks to the company's online purchasing options. But the biggest wave of new customers came following the protests in response to George Floyd's murder.

"With the horrific death of George Floyd and all the social injustice that was brought to the forefront, people wanted to support Black businesses," Madsen said. "Most of my customers knew that I was a Black-owned business and as soon as that happened, they kind of just propelled me up."

Madsen is the organized type, meaning this five-year ascension was by no means accidental. The business has strong relationships in the vegan community as well as with its customers. It also focuses staunchly on giving back to the community, with recent charity efforts to support the Farm Animal Refuge and other organizations.

In November 2020, the business opened its first storefront in the lobby of its Grantville production facility (located near a post office, the bakers had grown tired of turning away bystanders drawn to the building by the smell of cookies).

Above all, she said her primary concern is delivering consistent quality.

The standard is high: "These are Mrs. Fields style

cookies from the eighties," Madsen said, "only vegan."

The gourmet quality of Madsen's cookies, along with the ever-changing slate of flavors, is sure to tempt vegans and animal product-eaters alike. The mother of these baked delicacies struggles to choose a favorite.

"I don't have a personal favorite because they're like my kids and I can't choose one, but each week I have different ones that I am eating more often than others,"

Madsen said. "I really love my Brown Sugar Butterscotch cookie right now. Last week, I was eating a lot of my Gluten-Free Oat Milk Chocolate Chip."

Fan favorites include the Everything cookie, the perfect balance of salty and sweet, and her classic Snickerdoodle.

Visit Mayas-Cookies.com to shop Madsen's cookies or find storefront details.



Examples of the sweet Maya's Cookies selection. (courtesy of Maya's Cookies)



Maya Madsen bakes batches of delectable cookies for consumers with a sweet tooth. (courtesy of Maya's Cookies)

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Guided Pen honors local authors

By Terry L. Wilson

Scripps Ranch authors Bob Gilberg and Larry Carleton had their stories included in the San Diego Writers and Editors Guild 2020 anthology titled “The Guided Pen: Strange Happenings.”

The San Diego Writers and Editors Guild has published its annual anthology containing stories written by its members every year since 2012.

Gilberg puts pen to paper for the sheer delight of turning blank pages into memories of years gone by, also creating stories that explore the secrets of the heart.

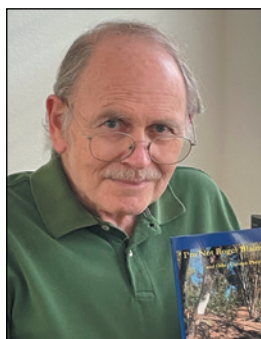
“The Last Road Rebel” was selected for the anthology series of short stories,” Gilberg said. “It’s about growing up in the ’50s and ’60s in small town Ohio when young people were trying to keep up with the music and social changes of the era. We had one foot in our parents’ music and the other in Elvis, then The Beatles and Dylan’s. We found our futures the old-fashioned way.”

Two of Gilberg’s books have been finalists in the San Diego Book Awards, he said. The last book he submitted was a romance novel, “Twists of Fate,” and he is currently writing “Burning Leaves,” a short story of life-altering events in peoples’ lives.

“As a writer, it’s important to have a realistic view of what it’s going to take to get your work published. In the process you can spend a tremendous amount of money that you more than likely will never get back,” Gilberg said. “I don’t do it to make money. People have to go into this field with their eyes wide-open. I’ve had a career; I’m fine. I retired at 59. I write because it’s fun. It’s more of a hobby than a moneymaking avocation. Getting good reviews and the occasional award is enough for me.”



Bob Gilberg



Larry Carleton

Carleton’s short story “I’m Not Roger Blaine and Other Curious Phenomenons” was published in the “The Guided Pen anthology.”

A retired San Diego State University philosophy professor, Carleton is battling Parkinson’s disease. Speaking is difficult. Now, instead of giving lectures in a classroom, he puts his words on paper.

“Larry was diagnosed in 2011; he used to be very active. There are a lot of things he once did that he can’t do anymore,” said Lynne, Carleton’s wife. “Being able to write his short stories and his books has helped Larry to deal with the affects of Parkinson’s. He can’t go hiking or even play his trumpet, and he has a difficult time speaking, but he can still write.”

“Immediately after I joined the Writers and Authors Guild, they started The Guided Pen series and I’ve had at least one story in each of their 10 books,” Larry said. “Writing gives me a sense of accomplishment and a way to communicate with my audience, especially now, because I can’t speak very well due to my disease.”

When asked what part of the writing process his wife plays, Larry forced a laugh and said, “She reads my stuff.”

Both authors have books on Amazon and available at the Central Library.

F.R.O.G.S. hop into action

By Terry L. Wilson

Members of the Real House Cats of Scripps Ranch Facebook group created a new program to help reunite lost cats and dogs with their anxious humans – using state-of-the-art microchip scanning.

“The program is called:

F.R.O.G.S., which stands for Feline Ranchers Offering Gato Scanning,” said Real House Cats member JL Nuss. “F.R.O.G.S. was made possible by the success of our Real House Cats of Scripps Ranch Cat calendar.

“This was the second year for our cat calendar. We were overwhelmed by the response, getting 151 sub-

missions, so we had more cats than we did months on the calendar. Since we wanted to use all of the pictures, we created a larger, yearbook-style layout.”

The finished calendar featured Ms. Harley on the cover. This feline’s backyard antics were made famous in the Real House Cats of

See **F.R.O.G.S.**, Page 10

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F.R.O.G.S

Continued from Page 9

Scripps Ranch page created by Jessica Pearson. Harley's notoriety eventually led to the idea of making a Cat Calendar. Those profits were used to benefit dogs and cats in Scripps Ranch by purchasing a portable chip scanner.

"We sold 125 copies of the calendar, raising \$647. With that money, we decided to purchase a community microchip scanner that we would use to identify pets found wandering in Scripps Ranch," Nuss said.

'... people began going to JL as a resource whenever they saw a cat that looked hungry, skinny and lost ...'

—JL Nuss

When the keywords "Lost" or "Found" appear on the Real House Cats of Scripps

Ranch page, a member of F.R.O.G.S. will hop into action to get the cat (or dog) scanned, then reunite them with their owner.

"It is very important that once you get your pet microchipped, to register that microchip number, otherwise the Microchip is useless," Nuss said.

"The whole F.R.O.G. thing started because so many people were finding strays," said Mary Lawler, a member of the Real House Cats clowder. "The Real Housecats was born out of JL's writing stories about Harley and her litters of kittens on



Hoppys is a local cat that was lost then reunited with its owner.

the website, and her finally trapping Harley and getting her and her kittens fixed and finding them homes. Soon after that, people began going to JL as a resource whenever they saw a cat that looked hungry, skinny and lost."

JL Nuss became a resource for the community. However, when people would find a lost cat, they didn't have any way to see if it had a chip because there wasn't a scanner available.

Now they have a portable chip scanner and can scan the chip and find the owner. Being able to match lost pets with their owners is a unique community service.

The F.R.O.G.S. team of volunteers are Scott Chang, Christy Cowling, Lesleigh Helder, Tina Lewis, JL



The Real House Cats of Scripps Ranch Facebook group purchased a microchip scanner for lost pets.

Nuss, Jessica Doughty Pearson, Jennifer Ott Rol, Mary Shweid and Ellen Pickering.

Visit Real House Cats of Scripps Ranch on Facebook at bit.ly/3nURn8T and Real House Dogs of Scripps Ranch at bit.ly/2N8mcds.

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Seniors Corner: Activities slipping away

By Ashley Shah

Seniors at Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS) express their thoughts about going through their senior year under distance learning restrictions.



Rocco Granucci
Four-year baseball player

“The main thing I’m missing is my senior baseball season. Sophomore year we went to CIF and since last year we didn’t get the chance to go again, I was hoping that this year we would be able to go and win,” Rocco Granucci said.

He described his feelings toward missing an in-person senior year.

“I miss seeing my friends that I would make in specific classes. I miss the social environment at lunch. I was also really looking forward to going to prom with my girlfriend of three years,” he said.

He shared the difficulties he has experienced due to virtual learning.

“It’s just hard to stay motivated. Staring at a screen really sucks and I find it really hard to stay motivated when you’re not physically going somewhere,” Granucci said.

At SRHS, Granucci is part of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program.

Outside of school, he volunteers for the organization Lion’s heart.

Granucci plans to go to a four-year university to study business and play Division III baseball.



Sanjana Ganti
Captain of the varsity tennis team

“I really miss the face-to-face interaction. I was really looking forward to my last tennis season, rallies and school spirit,” Sanjana Ganti said.

She explained her thoughts on this virtual school year.

“The lack of face-to-face interaction makes it feel less like school. It doesn’t feel like senior year. We haven’t had any dances or any sporting events,” Ganti said.

Ganti shared the benefits she has seen with virtual learning.

“Three classes have helped to decrease the workload and helped when I was applying to colleges. I’ve noticed that when you’re taking more APs, you’re not as overwhelmed because it’s more split up now. I have more time to focus on other things now,” she said.

Along with varsity tennis at SRHS, Ganti is the manager for the boys tennis team and is part of the Model United Nations club.

Outside of SRHS, she is the president of the South Asian Culture Show (SACS) and plays guitar.

She has plans to go to an in state four-year university

and study computer science.



Makenzie Kensel
Four-year field hockey player

“I’m really missing not having a senior field hockey season. We probably would have gone to playoffs and played in CIF again. I just miss being able to hang out with my second family,” Makenzie Kensel said.

She conveyed her struggles and positive experiences with online learning.

“It’s kind of harder with teachers that don’t understand technology as much. It’s also hard to stay motivated because you’re not in a physical classroom. There are way more distractions when you’re at home. I also miss seeing my friends that

I usually wouldn’t see outside of school,” Kensel said. “Being at home though has led me to have more time outside of school work. I am able to do things that I enjoy more now.”

Kensel shared her final wishes for the school year.

“I really hope that we are able to have prom,” she said.

Outside of school, Kensel coaches field hockey for middle schoolers for the club team Mystix.

She is committed to Hartwick College for Division III field hockey where she hopes to study psychology.



Alanna Reyes
Four-year volleyball player

“I miss the little things
See SENIORS CORNER, Page 12



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Popular student video: 'Surfin' USA'

By Kaila Mellos

Garner Saguil, a fourth-grade seminar teacher and the choir director at Dingeman Elementary School, has been teaching his class ukulele since last year after teaching himself how to play during a vacation.

'It's catching on, and it's funny, teachers from all over the United States have been messaging me asking me how I got ukuleles for my classroom ...'

—Garner Saguil

"I started researching ukuleles for the kids, and I found the prices for all of that," Saguil said. "I started researching grants, and I put together a grant with donorschoose.org. But the only thing with donorschoose.org is you can only put in for 25 ukuleles, and I teach fourth



Dingeman Elementary School teacher Garner Saguil taught his students how to play the ukulele and posted a popular video of them singing and playing "Surfin' USA" by The Beach Boys. (courtesy of Garner Saguil)

grade, and our numbers can go up to 35 students."

With the help of the donorschoose.org grant – and another grant through the San Diego Unified School District Visual and Performing Arts program for the other 10 ukuleles – he had the full set of 35 and could begin teaching his students.

This year, however, with COVID-19 preventing any

in-person teaching, Saguil loaned the 35 ukuleles to his students in the hope of giving them the musical experience that he loved so much.

"I sent [the ukuleles] all home, and it was probably the best decision I've ever made," Saguil said. "This year, the kids have really become proficient on the ukulele because they have them at home every day, and they're

regularly practicing, and it's made a huge difference."

With the ukuleles now with the students, Saguil decided this year he would have the students learn and perform one song. That song: "Surfin' USA" by The Beach Boys.

"I was looking at the songs that I was teaching them, and 'Surfin' USA' is a fun song. When I first in-

troduced it to them, I started with the YouTube video of The Beach Boys. They looked at it, and they were like, 'Oh, this is weird.' You know, of course, it's black and white, and they're dancing kind of funny and wearing funny clothes. So, they said, 'Uh, are we really going to learn the song?' And I said, 'sure, why not?'"

Saguil, along with his teacher's assistant, taught the kids the four chords required to play the song and then focused on the singing aspect of it. He broke the kids up into groups and put them in breakout rooms to practice.

"I would visit the breakout rooms and have them practice the strumming techniques of the song. I would have them check their chords to make sure they were chording properly," he said. "And then when we got to the harmony part – I split them up, boys and girls."

Once the song was performed
See **SURFIN' USA**, Page 13

SENIORS CORNER

Continued from Page 11

like seeing friends during lunch and passing period, and sitting in my car in the morning listening to music," Alanna Reyes said. "I definitely miss high school volleyball. This would have been my senior season, which is a really special time for dedicated athletes."

She described how online learning has benefitted her.

"I have a little more independent time for homework and extracurriculars, which is much needed since our classes are moving at a much faster pace with more independent work. It is also nice to wear comfy pajamas to class every day too," she said.

Reyes explained how virtual learning can be challenging as well.

"No one is really stopping us from lazily lying in bed and not paying attention, so we have to motivate ourselves to stay proactive and engaged. It is also really hard for me, as a visual and social learner, to fully grasp concepts through a screen," Reyes said.

At SRHS, she is part of Associated Student Body and the Letters of Light club.

Outside of school, she plays for Wave Volleyball Club and volunteers at Feeding San Diego.

She plans to attend a four-year university and study kinesiology/exercise science.

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SRHS Students highlight career paths

By Ashley Shah

Sophomores at Scripps Ranch High School (SRHS) Michael Ohayon and Anush Salaniwal started a club to help students of all levels learn about career paths.

“When I was in quarantine, I was talking to a lot of college and fellow high school students about what career they wanted to enter. For a lot of students, they found it hard to nail down one answer. Many of them didn’t know what they wanted to do and, honestly, I found myself in the same boat,” Salaniwal said.

‘If we get to see at least one person that is able to find their career path because of our work, then this is all worth it.’

—Michael Ohayon

To help his fellow peers, Salaniwal decided to start the Scripps Ranch Professional Career Club (SRPCEC) and enlisted the help of Ohayon.

“This club is aimed at students of any grade level that find themselves confused about what path they want to follow. I think choosing a career path is really daunt-



Michael Ohayon and Anush Salaniwal (photo courtesy of Michael Ohayon)

ing and I wanted to educate myself and those around me so that we are able to make the right choice for ourselves,” Salaniwal said.

Salaniwal and Ohayon set up a YouTube channel in which they interview professionals in different careers to aid those who find themselves lost.

They have interviewed a pediatric anesthesiologist and an electrical engineer who also teaches, for example.

The team planned to post interviews with these professionals about once or twice a month.

“The interviews that we post give our peers first-hand knowledge about these career paths. With these interviews, you get to see the parts of these careers that aren’t in a textbook or written. It’s the real experiences and trials of these professionals that help students who are unsure of what career they might want to go into,” Salaniwal said.

Not only does the club have a YouTube channel, but they also promote their interviews on their Instagram page @scrippsranchn_careerexploration.

“On the Instagram page, we post about the interviews that we conducted. We also use the Instagram page as part of our outreach. We hope that people will see the page and watch the videos and learn, or that professionals see the page and are willing to be interviewed,” Ohayon said.

For Salaniwal and Ohayon, their main goal is to continue educating and inspiring others.

“As someone who is also trying to find the right career path, it just makes me happy to know that my word is getting out there. I want to be able to educate those around me because I know how difficult it can be to narrow down a career path,” Ohayon said.

Outside of the SRPCEC,

Salaniwal plays water polo for SRHS as well as the club team Poway Valley and has also played piano for nine years.

At SRHS, Ohayon participates in Winterguard, plays sousaphone in the marching band and has been playing guitar for seven years.

“I feel like we’re all so stressed about what’s after high school or what’s coming next so, if we can just help clear that up and re-

lieve some of that tension, that is our hope. If we get to see at least one person that is able to find their career path because of our work, then this is all worth it,” Ohayon said.

The team hopes to expand its outreach by using social media platforms.

To reach them, email srpcec@gmail.com. To keep up with the latest interviews, watch their YouTube channel at bit.ly/3sqHVNY.

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SURFIN' USA

Continued from Page 12

formed and recorded through Zoom, the final piece that was missing, according to Saguil, was the production company to put it all together and create a video to share.

Finding a production company to put a video together was not easy to do in November or December due to all the recitals and other music performances at every other school. Saguil had to go through a list of companies until he finally reached out to C. Scott Company in Minnesota.

“I signed a contract with the production company, and we started the project. Right away, I started searching for grants, and once again, our Visual and Performing Arts department has a foundation, and the foundation grant came out at about the same time, and I applied for it,” he said.



Saguil received that grant, and the video was now paid for and set to be ready by January.

After posting the video to his own Facebook page, making it public, it has gotten more than 5,000 views, and teachers from all over are reaching out to him for tips to do something similar.

“I’m surprised at how quickly it’s spreading. Every time I look on Facebook, it’s getting more and more views. I think the last time I checked, it’s over 5,000 views, and it’s been on less

than a week,” Saguil said. “It’s catching on, and it’s funny, teachers from all over the United States have been messaging me asking me how I got ukuleles for my classroom and asking me how I’m able to teach via Zoom and how I put together a project like this. So, I’ve been responding to them because I think it’s important that, as a teacher, we share our ideas and tips so that way we can spread the love of music as much as we can.”

View the video here: bit.ly/2XMHwY9.



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Forrest, you make me so happy! ♥ Jenny

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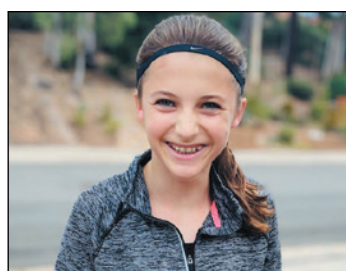
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Happy Birthday!



Happy 14th Birthday, Olivia!! We are so grateful for you every day. Your kindness & compassion make the world a better place. We love you! Mom & Dad



Happy 11th Birthday Ryan. You're a very special boy and we anticipate you'll go very far in life. You're a bright boy. We love you.



Happy 6th Birthday, Ainsley! We love you so much and we hope this is a wonderful, fun-filled year! Lots of Love, Mommy and Daddy



Happy 1st Birthday to Sawyer Fiero! What a blessing and joy you have been! We love you to the moon and back! Love Mom, Dad and Jackson.



Happy 7th Birthday, Vivienne! You truly are full of life and we love you more each day. Love from Mom and Dad.



Hop-py birthday to Maia, our favorite little kit – no bunny even compares! We love you hare-y much and hope you have an in-carrot-ible day! Love, your fluffle family



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If you know someone having a birthday in February, 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.

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SR Lacrosse looks forward to activities

The Scripps Ranch Lacrosse Association has been following the San Diego County and State of California health guidelines in preparation for the upcoming spring season.

The safety of players, coaches and families are the top priority. If permitted and safe, there will be a spring season. Some options under consideration include a shortened county-wide season or one that involves distanced practices and clinics, or SRLax only scrimmages.

Check the website (www.srlax.org) or contact the program directors to get up to date information.



The Scripps Ranch Lacrosse Association is preparing for a spring season. (courtesy of Scripps Ranch Lacrosse Association)

Boys grades K-8

Boys lacrosse is a cross between basketball, soccer and hockey. The league is a recreational program for all abilities in grades K-8. The season runs February through May. Practices are during

the week at Marshall Middle School and games are on the weekend throughout San Diego County. Visit Facebook at Scripps Ranch Boys Lacrosse, www.srlax.org, or email SRLax92131@gmail.com for more information.

Girls grades 3-8

Girls lacrosse is a recreational program intended to teach the game and develop skills. The spring season runs February through June. Practices are at Marshall Middle School and games are throughout San Diego County. Check out www.srlax.org or email Greg Alioto at galioto@laxware.net for more information.



Student athletes join in the Let Them Play rally on Jan. 15.

Rally supports sports opening

Demonstrators lined Scripps Ranch Boulevard next to Scripps Ranch High School on Jan. 15 during a planned show of support for re-starting youth sports competition across California. Youth sports, especially high school sports, have been interrupted and seasons have been cancelled since the spread of COVID-19 has run rampant across the state. Restrictions put in place by the governor have restricted sports activities.

The rally was part of planned events organized

by Let Them Play, a grass roots effort of parents, students, coaches, staff and fans focused on doing whatever it takes to get California athletes back in action. Rallies were planned in other communities across the state on the same day.

No high school athletic competitions can begin until the "Stay at Home" order is lifted for the entire Southern California region, although Feb. 1 is a tentative date selected by CIFSD.

SRSA registration is currently underway

The Scripps Ranch Softball Association (SRSA) said it is committed to providing all of its players and their families with the best possible experience for the 2021 softball season. It knows how important it is for players to be active, socialize and have fun in a safe environment.

With that in mind, SRSA wanted to lay out the plan for the season ahead, so that there is complete transparency into how it will make this work.

Season registration

Registration will be \$150 per player, which will include a full practice up to three days a week to maximize the experience for all players with registration open indefinitely so girls can join when they are comfortable or when things change.

Coaches will provide drills and practice plans for a safe group experience to allow players to be active and develop their love for softball. SRSA will operate these practice sessions under the safe guidelines established by the County of San Diego.

The SRSA softball program is dedicated to offering girls the opportunity to learn and play recreational fastpitch softball in a fun and safe environment. In addition, it is dedicated to providing a league for girls of all skill levels with the goal of improving their softball skills, making new friends, developing team building skills and having fun.

Season information

Competitive practices including pitching and catching will be held during the

week including Saturdays, either morning or afternoon. The league will adjust accordingly if county restrictions change.

Afternoon and evening weekday practices will be added once Daylight Savings Time begins.

Coaches may choose to add optional additional cages or practices.

Quality team jerseys are included in the registration fees.

Divisions

- T-Ball: Birth year 2015
 - Rookies: Birth year 2014
 - 8U: Birth years 2012-13
 - 10U: Birth years 2010-11
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Be sure to create a budget, work with reputable professionals and schedule wisely when planning home renovations. (StatePoint)

Tips for successful renovation

(StatePoint) Thinking of remodeling your home? From safety and security to product and contractor selection, there are many factors to consider.

Follow these eight remodeling tips to help minimize hassles during a renovation:

1. Create a budget. Create a project budget and set a spending limit. Whether you plan to utilize savings, home equity loan, line of credit or free up funds through refinancing, now is the time to identify how you will finance the project and how much you want to spend.

2. Prepare the house. Before work starts, clear all spaces where professionals will be working, as well as walkways they will use to access these areas. Remove valuables and breakables to avoid damage and cover furniture in areas where paint or dust could harm upholstery.

Keep other considerations in mind. For example, if

you're renovating the kitchen, you may need to create a temporary food prep area.

3. Work with reputable professionals. When selecting a contractor, be sure they have references, certification and an understanding of the project.

For example, when tackling window and door projects, Andersen Windows, Inc. recommends hiring an Andersen Certified Contractor to do the job. These contractors receive product training, installation resources, offer an exclusive 2-year limited installation warranty, and their expertise and experience in an extensive range of residential projects means they're able to capture your vision for your home, and work with you to provide the right products.

Bottom line: working with reputable professionals makes all the difference in the quality of the work and the materials used to complete the project.

4. Schedule wisely. Choose a timeframe for your home renovation that best fits your busy schedule. Keep in mind that unforeseen circumstances can sometimes cause delays. Build this into the timeline so you're not taken by surprise.

5. Address safety. Talk to your contractor about what COVID-19 measures they practice to help keep customers and employees safe. Find out whether they're following CDC guidelines for businesses, including always wearing a mask, social distancing whenever possible and frequent hand washing. Also, ask if they offer virtual consultations that allow you to start the process contact-free.

6. Add or update your security system. With professionals frequently coming in and out of your home, a home renovation may be a good time to add or update your security system with reprogrammable smart locks. Offering more convenience and greater control, the Yale Assure Lock for Andersen patio and entry doors for example, is a sleek, key-free entry lock that makes it easy to grant access to contractors for limited periods of time, lock and unlock doors from anywhere and monitor from afar.

7. Communicate openly and effectively. If a renovation is done correctly, you may never need to repeat the process. This makes open and honest communication with your home renovation team essential. Be sure to share your vision and to ask questions as they arise. At the same time, expect the professionals working with you to communicate regularly and address all your concerns.

8. Get a return on your investment. Prioritize projects that will potentially raise the resale value of your home. According to FortuneBuilders, the top 10 greatest returns on investment for home renovations include bathroom and kitchen remodels, landscaping, replacing entry doors and replacing windows. It also helps to select products that come with transferrable warranties. This will give your property a tangible leg-up on the market when it's time to sell.

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Overall home sales are up nearly 26 percent year-over-year

The pandemic has presented certain challenges in buying and selling real estate – but those challenges have done nothing to slow home sales.

According to data from the National Association of REALTORS®, home sales in the United States increased a whopping 25.8 percent from November 2019 to November 2020. Inventory is also too low to meet demand – which is driving up housing prices across the country.

“Sales for all of 2020 are already on pace to surpass last year’s levels,” National Association of REALTORS® chief economist Lawrence Yun said in the article. “Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s amazing that the housing sector is outperforming expectations.”

What does this mean for you? Thanks to low inventory and high buyer demand,



homes are selling quickly and profitably and significantly outpacing 2019 sales – so if you’ve been thinking about listing your home, now is a great time to make a move.

If you are a buyer, you are still capitalizing on a market in an upswing. Don’t let the lack of inventory

discourage you, just know what you are getting in to. Remember, in this market there will be huge interest and often multiple offers. Negotiating can be quick and aggressive and you may miss out on more than one home. Be sure you have an agent who can help you understand what to expect.

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Spruce up learning spaces

(StatePoint) This year’s school circumstances are far from normal. Parents and educators alike are still unsure what the coming months will look like, and their district plans and policies could change overnight, even as classes are underway.

If you’re a parent with students learning virtually at home, there is a cost-effective secret weapon that can be used for countless projects: shelf liner. Here are fun and useful ways to use shelf liner this season:

Dress up learning spaces.

From sprucing up desks and shelves to personalizing storage areas in a home learning space, shelf liner can help add fun pops of pattern to your décor while protecting surfaces from damage and messes. Use coordinating colors to tie the whole room together.

Contain dirt and grime in high-traffic areas.

Prepare for messes with



Consider versatile supplies that can simplify the task of virtual learning. (StatePoint)

a shelf liner featuring antimicrobial protection, which prevents the growth of odor-causing mold and mildew on the liner. Line a small section of the floor near your entryway to create a designated “drop zone” for dirty backpacks, shoes and sports equipment.

Protect workstations.

Students taking part in virtual learning are bound to take their studying into

new places around the home. Use clear liner to catch rings or condensation from drinks, as well as other spills or messes in your home office and other living spaces.

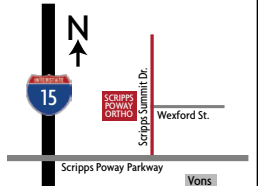
Label supplies.

Clear liner can help organize your child’s items around the home learning space with fun, colorful labels. Simply draw or cut out See **LEARNING SPACES**, Page 19



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The winner of the Scripps Ranch News-24/7 Realty Home for the Holidays Lighting Contest Norman Rockwell Award was the Billitti home, "Lights of Joy and Peace." (photo by Justin Fine)



The winner of the Norman Rockwell Award (photo by Justin Fine)

Lighting contest displays sparkled brightly

The 2020 Scripps Ranch News-24/7 Realty Home for the Holidays Lighting Contest added a special twinkle to the holiday season by showcasing festive Scripps Ranch homes and providing a fun seasonal distraction. In most instances, the outdoor light displays are longtime family traditions.

'We thought, people are coming to the house, why not use it to do some good, especially this year? It really warmed our hearts.'

—Joe Billitti

The big winner was submitted by Joe Billitti. The home lighting display on Elderwood Lane earned the "Norman Rockwell Award," earning a \$250 gift card to Home Depot.

The Norman Rockwell Award was given to the home with "truly elegant displays that accentuate and



Joe Billitti and daughter Monica celebrate after receiving the Norman Rockwell Award. (photo by Laura Stephens)

coordinate with the beauty and elegance of the home."

This is the judges' statement for the Billitti home lighting display: "What is more elegant than syncing a light show programmed to their own radio channel and amazing, beautiful display! This is an ongoing historic SR delight!"

The Billitti family used to live across the street a few houses away, and this is the

first time they went all-out with decorations in three years.

"We thought with COVID – 2020 was a tough year for everyone – that people needed a really good Christmas light show. I think we all needed it," Joe Billitti said.

His daughter, Monica, a biology major at Cal Poly Pomona, was distance learning at home because of the pan-

See **LIGHTING CONTEST**, Page 19



The Sturch home, "Sturch Family Christmas," won the Clark Griswold Award. (photo by Justin Fine)



The Byrnes home, "Joven Street 'Byrnes' Bright," won the Nostalgia Award. (photo by Justin Fine)

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The Granum home, "There's some Ho Ho Ho's in this House," won the Misfit Toy Award. (photo by Justin Fine)



The Schnee home, "Dinosaur and Friends at Play," won the Grandma Got Run Over Award. (photo by Justin Fine)

LIGHTING CONTEST

Continued from Page 18

demio so, she was able to help set up decorations as she had in years past. She mostly helps with the ground work such as the net lights, penguins and lighted arches.

"We have a big star on the top of the house, which is my favorite because it was our first big display. ... It's been the thing that's stuck with us throughout all these years," Monica said.

Beyond the fact that their display is synched with holiday tunes from a radio station, another big feature is that they also collect food items for the San Diego Food Bank while their display is up. This time they collected more than 300 pounds of food.

"We thought, 'People are coming to the house, why not use it to do some good, especially this year?' It really warmed our hearts," Joe said.

The family loves the holidays and decorating. They started their display in October this time around.

"It's a bit of an obsession," Joe said. "I'll be out mowing the lawn and I'll look up and I'll be like, 'I wonder if we could add this in next year?'"

Many parts of their display are "old school" and have special meaning to the family, Joe said. He plans to use the \$250 gift card to Home Depot to buy more lights.

LEARNING SPACES

Continued from Page 17

letters from construction paper, then use liner to easily adhere the DIY labels.

For more information about all the ways you can use clear adhesive liner during the school season, visit www.duckbrand.com.



The Barger home, "Merriest Court on Earth," won the Sparkle Award. (photo by Justin Fine)

The Clark Griswold Award, presented for "The most over the top lights with lighting displays and motion," was awarded to entrant Jeremy Sturch. The Sturch home is on Dichondra Court. The prize for the Clark Griswold Award was a \$100 gift card to Amazon.

The Byrnes home was awarded "The Nostalgia Award - Reminds me of my childhood." The display, submitted by Kim Byrnes, is on Caminito Joven, and featured good old Charlie Brown and characters from the Peanuts cartoon. Prize for the Nostalgia Award was a \$50 gift card to Public House.

The "Misfit Toy Award" for best use of inflatables went to the Granum home on Timberlake Drive, submitted by Mathew K. Granum. The prize was a \$25 gift card to the French Oven Bakery.

The "Grandma Got Run Over Award" for the funniest display was awarded to the Schnee home on Ashlar Place, entered by Gerard Schnee. This display featured several fun inflatables including huge penguins and dinosaurs. The prize was a \$25 gift card to Nutmeg Café.

"The Sparkle Award" for

the twinkliest lights went to the Barger home on Meritage Court, submitted by Jered Barger. The prize was a \$25 gift card to Board & Brew.

Judges' comments: "The whole street twinkles - but this one is the winner."

The theme for this year's contest was "Home for the Holidays." Judging and prizes were provided by 24/7 Realty, the sponsor of the entire event. Yard signs for the entrants were created and placed by 24/7 Realty.

By all accounts, the public enjoyed this new, popular Scripps Ranch tradition,

and the festive holiday light displays lifted spirits during this time of the global pandemic. The response to the contest was overwhelmingly positive. Numerous Scripps Ranch families utilized the detailed Home for the Holidays map published in Scripps Ranch News and on ScrippsRanchNews.com to plan driving tours of the decorated homes in the contest.

Laura Stephens of 24/7 Realty dropped off contest prizes to the winners on Christmas Eve, and the winners were announced to the public Christmas morning on ScrippsRanchNews.com.

A total of 32 homes were entered in the contest, which was far beyond expectations. Next year's contest promises to be even bigger as there is already talk of neighbors planning new displays, along with the possibility of new, fun categories. While some scheme for bigger displays, the competition remains lighthearted and in good fun.

The 2020 Scripps Ranch News-24/7 Realty Home for the Holidays Lighting Contest was an exclusive production of Scripps Ranch News and sponsored wholly by 24/7 Realty.



The Barger family celebrates winning the Sparkle Award after receiving their prize. (photo by Laura Stephens)



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