



The Downey Patriot



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Friday, December 21, 2007

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Recalled toys being sold at swap meet

■ Toys are not posted on government recall lists, but were taken off store shelves for defects.

By ERIC PIERCE, CITY EDITOR

DOWNEY – Children's toys recalled from a major retail store due to mislabeling and potential "pinching" are being sold by vendors at Warren High School's Saturday morning swap meet, according to an investigation recently conducted by *The Downey Patriot*.

The toys, clearly marked with stapled recall notices that warn "do not sell," as well as instructions to take the toys off store shelves, were apparently obtained by independent vendors through Target retail stores.

This newspaper's investigation, conducted on consecutive Saturdays in late November and early December, found a single vendor selling the toys on the school's campus. About a dozen recalled toys were being offered for sale.

This newspaper purchased a recalled Halloween flashlight, size-C batteries and stencils for \$2.

Tom, a supervisor at Target's corporate office (he declined to give his last name citing company policy), said that recalled merchandise is routinely pulled off store shelves. If the product is deemed unsafe, Tom said, it is either destroyed or returned to its distributor and listed with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), a government agency responsible for tracking recalled products.

But other times, Tom said, products are recalled for relatively minor reasons, such as labeling errors or small defects. In these instances, Target may sell the recalled merchandise to distributors in bulk quantities, which can legally set their own prices and resell the merchandise.

The toys do not pose significant threats to children, but may "pinch your fingers" or have incorrect packaging information, Tom said.

But because the toys do not show up on any government recall list, they can legally be resold to the public.

"I would be very interested to know who is selling it," said Warren High School Principal John Harris when informed of the recalled toys. "We try to keep a G-rated environment at the swap meet. I can tell you that is something we would not approve or condone of."

Harris said swap meet products must be conducive to a school environment, adding that police in the past have sanctioned vendors for peddling pellet guns and counterfeit clothing.

In 2005, detectives with the Downey Police Department arrested seven people and seized approximately 325 DVD movies and 2,400 CDs at the swap meet in an investigation conducted jointly with the Recording Industry of America and the Motion Picture Association of America.

Last year, an estimated 140,700 children were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms due to toy-related accidents, according to the CPSC.

Turning up the heat on community reading

By JAN PALEN, SENIOR LIBRARIAN, DOWNEY CITY LIBRARY

You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them." Critically acclaimed writer Ray Bradbury spoke these words, reflecting one of the major themes of his 1953 classic, "Fahrenheit 451." In 2005, the City of Long Beach chose Bradbury's science fiction work as part of their "Long Beach Reads One Book" project. A futuristic look at a society where books are burned and critical thought is suppressed, the book appears on many school reading lists and has been made into two films. The Long Beach community was encouraged to read the book and join discussion groups and programs offered throughout the city during the month of March.

A kick-off event featured an interview with Bradbury, sponsored by the Long Beach Library Foundation, Long Beach City College and Charter Cable. Bradbury said he wrote the book in nine days on a UCLA campus typewriter for \$9.80 at 10 cents per page. The author told the audience that book burning took place more than 5,000 years ago in Egypt as well as in Hitler Germany. But Bradbury said he wrote "Fahrenheit 451" out of love, not to predict the future but to prevent suppression.

"I will have succeeded if you do something about it," he told the audience. During the interview, Bradbury also inspired students from Long Beach City College and Jordan High School with this advice: "Upon awakening every morning, say to yourself, 'Here's another chance to do something wonderfully exciting.' The best thing you can do is involve yourself in doing loving things...I believe in living your life to the highest extent every day."

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The Downey Patriot
is moving!

Effective Jan. 2, 2008 our new address will be 8301 E. Florence Ave., suite 100, located at the intersection of Florence and Downey Avenues.

Our phone, fax and e-mail information will remain the same.

A new type of Neighborhood Watch



Members of the Downey Police Department's Citizen's Academy pose after a Friday night session at Rio Hondo College's shooting range. The academy, which concluded last week, taught Downey citizens, business owners and members of the community the ins and outs of law enforcement services in Downey. Mayor Pro Tem Mario Guerra, a previous graduate of the class, is shown at left. Photo courtesy Downey Police Department

Citizen's Academy graduates its 12th class

■ The Downey Police Department's recently reinstated Citizen's Academy finishes three-month course on law enforcement in Downey. Another session looms around the corner.

By ERIC PIERCE, CITY EDITOR

Last week marked the end of the Downey Police Department's Citizen's Academy, a three-month long comprehensive look at how local law enforcement services are rendered in the city of Downey. I'm proud to say that in the 12 weeks of courses, I only missed two classes: a special Friday night gun session at Rio Hondo College's shooting range (a Lakers pre-season basketball game in Las Vegas beckoned me and I surrendered to temptation), and the Dec. 5 class on gang violence, which I missed due to the mayoral transition at City Hall (not that that didn't have its exciting moments itself).

The academy covered most, if not all, aspects of police work, from "routine" traffic stops (there's no such thing as routine, I learned, not when a driver has his hands in his pockets) to the exhaustive but intriguing analytical work conducted by Downey's CSI team (one of their cold cases was recently featured on a TV show).

The students attending the academy were as diverse as the course itself: Pastor Richard Kurrasch and Reverend Mark Warnstedt, community pillar Tracy Riley, Mambo Grill restaurant owner David Llamas, Field Deputy Joe Matthews representing Supervisor Don Knabe, plus a collection of other residents representing different community groups, organizations and businesses.

I attended the class on behalf of *The Downey Patriot*, hoping to gain an insight into the inner-workings of the Downey Police Department.

Passion for art drives Downey artist

By BROOKE KARLI, STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY – You may have seen his work at the Downey Family YMCA. You may have seen his work on Paramount Boulevard in the parking lot of Harley-Davidson. Or you may have seen his work around town on motorcycles, barstools, or even toilet seat lids. Regardless, it's almost a guarantee you've seen the art of Narciso Barrera.

Narciso, 38, began his career as a custom airbrushing, illustration and design artist in 2005, after being laid-off from a job he held for over 15 years. Unlike many artists, Narciso never took art classes, but was rather always one to tinker with the hobby.

"Everything I know, I taught myself," said Narciso, a 12-year Downey resident. "I have just been fortunate enough to transform my hobby into a business."

Narciso works primarily with acrylics, automotive paint, and mixed media, which includes markers, brushes, airbrushes and more. He uses everything from helmets and leather jackets, to walls and metal as his canvas, and although he has done numerous wall murals, he is currently trying to focus more on the automotive industry.

"I want to design off-the-wall cars," Narciso said. "And I would love to do publishing and commercial illustration such as magazine ads and book covers."

Because he grew up in the rock 'n' roll scene – and the majority of his clientele are bikers – Narciso works a lot with skulls, flames and pin-up art. The artists he draws inspiration from – Luis Royo, Carlos Cartagena, HR Giger, and Ed "Big Daddy" Roth – all have influence on Narciso's work.

"All of my work is original, unless the client wants a specific image that has already been created," said Narciso. "I usually meet, on average, with a client for a couple of hours to brainstorm and discuss ideas."

Although Narciso has clientele throughout Southern California, many of his clients are from Orange. He also works with Los Angeles Harley-

Davidson, participating in shows and toy drives, and is involved with Bikers Against Diabetes (BAD). Narciso creates work and donates it to BAD's annual retreat to be auctioned off, with proceeds benefiting the American Diabetes Association. Narciso has had diabetes for two years and his father, as well as his girlfriend's parents, suffers from the disease.

"Participating in BAD is helping a cause close to home," Narciso said. Narciso currently works in partnership with Dreams Auto Body in Downey in order to work on major projects such as cars and boats, but hopes to someday have his own shop that would strictly focus on custom work, completing projects from beginning to end.

"Art is a way of life you create," said Narciso. "You can't see yourself doing anything else because you live a lifestyle of creating art."

To contact Narciso, call (562) 787-5894, or (562) 861-7821.

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One of Narciso Barrera's custom pieces of works.

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Hundreds of books collected for school

■ Downey Federal Credit Union hosts month-long book drive for students of Lewis Elementary School.

DOWNEY – Downey Federal Credit Union (DFCU) has concluded its second annual book drive, which culminated in the donation of 229 new books to Lewis Elementary School, the credit union's "Adopt-a-School" for 2007-08.

The credit union collected new books and financial donations from both members and employees. Donation bins were placed in the credit union's main branch in the Express Service Office at Downey Regional Medical Center from Nov. 16 through Dec. 12.

DFCU's Business Development Representative Kari Johnson brought the books and wrapping paper to the school so teachers could choose age-appropriate reading material for students whose parents may not be in a position to purchase books for them during the holiday season.

DFCU also sponsored a raffle prize for a \$100 supermarket gift certificate from entrants of the book donations. Randy and Carole Miller, long-time DFCU members, were the raffle prize winners. They chose to donate the \$100 Ralph's gift certificate to a family from Lewis Elementary.

"The teachers are so pleased to be able to give books to children who would otherwise not have reading materials at home to expand their skills," said Lewis Elementary School Principal Robin Martin.

Barbara Lamberth, president and CEO of DFCU, said, "Downey Federal Credit Union supports the residents of Downey and wants to extend a helping hand to families in need. At the holiday season, it is important that all children receive some type of gift. A new book is an everlasting gift, and truly makes a difference in the life of a child."

Little League hosting sign-ups

DOWNEY – Northwest Downey Little League will be taking sign-ups for the 2008 little league baseball season on Jan. 5 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Jan. 9 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., at Furman Park.

Applicants are required to bring three forms of residency verification. Tryouts will be held Jan. 12 at Furman Park and the season will begin on Feb. 23.

For more information, call Lance Torgerson at (562) 761-2148, or James Veloff at (562) 861-2696. Recorded information can be obtained by calling (562) 928-0363, or visiting www.nwdll.org.

City offers 'Holiday Haven' program

DOWNEY – The City of Downey Community Services Department will be offering children ages 6 to 11 several outdoor activities at local parks through the drop-in program, "Holiday Haven," beginning Wednesday.

The program will continue through Jan. 4 and will operate daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Several activities, including "Lunch with the Leaders" (children bring their own lunch), caroms, Snowball Play and crafts, will be planned for each day. The program will be available at Apollo, Dennis the Menace, Rio San Gabriel, Furman and Golden Parks. At Brookshire and Crawford Parks, the program will operate from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

The program is free but registration is required. Registration can be completed at any of the parks mentioned starting Wednesday. For information, call (562) 904-7238.



Lewis Elementary School kindergarten teacher Lacy Veith collects books donated by Downey Federal Credit Union members and employees for her class.



Over 350 children and parents participated in Ward Elementary School's first annual Family Holiday Story Night on Dec. 11. Students dressed in their pajamas and spent the evening listening to holiday stories, also receiving special gifts from each story. The evening concluded with refreshments and Christmas carols in the school cafeteria.

Christmas trees being picked up curbside

■ CalMet Services will collect trees Dec. 26 to Jan. 18 on regularly scheduled trash days.

DOWNEY – Downey residents receiving automated curbside trash collection may place their Christmas trees curbside on their regular trash day. Collection of trees will run from Dec. 26 to Jan. 18.

The trees will be collected by CalMet Services, the city's franchised refuse hauler, and taken to the Puente Hills Landfill, where they will be composted or ground up and used for the County Sanitation Districts' Landfill Cover Project.

Before being picked up, tree stands and decorations should be removed, trees over four feet tall should be cut in half and trees should not be put into bags. Flocked trees will also be picked up.

Residents and businesses may also bring trees to a "Tree Drop-Off Bin" at the city's Public Works Yard parking lot, located at 12324 Bellflower Blvd., behind Independence Park. The drop-off will be available from Dec. 26 to Jan. 18.

Commercial accounts such as businesses and apartments may call CalMet at (562) 259-1239, ext. 7, for free pick-up of holiday trees. Trees must be set out at the curb and not by trash bins.

In addition, the Downey Fire Department suggests the following tree fire safety tips:

1. Provide a water reservoir for your tree and maintain the water level at two-thirds full, the first watering should be with warm water.
2. Placement should be away from fireplaces, wall heating units, and central heating air ducts. A distance equal to the height of the tree.
3. Any lights placed on your tree should be U.L. approved and in good condition.
4. Check for dryness by standing in front of a branch, grasp it with reasonably firm pressure and pull your hand toward you, allowing the branch to slip through your grasp. If needles fall off readily, the tree does not have adequate moisture content and should be removed immediately.

Christian club celebrating the New Year

DOWNEY – The Downey Christian Women's Club will celebrate the New Year at their next meeting, "A New Beginning," on Jan. 9 at the Los Amigos Country Club.

The special feature will be presented by Marilyn Madru. Vickie Caldwell will be the meeting's speaker, discussing "Finding Peace in the Eye of The Storm." Jacqueline Mc Evilly will provide music.

The lunch meeting starts at 11:45 a.m. and the cost is \$12. The community (including men) is invited. Reservations are requested by calling Sonja at (562) 862-4347 or Delores at (562) 868-7135.

Congregational meeting at Temple

DOWNEY – The members of Temple Ner Tamid will be holding their semi-annual Congregational Meeting on Jan. 13 at 10 a.m. President David Saltzman will preside and a continental breakfast will be served.

Following the meeting, Miriam and Howard Brookfield will present a new Torah as a gift to the Temple. A lunch sponsored by Myrtle and Jim Pinsky will be served after the dedication.

For more information on the meeting or any of the Temple's services, call (562) 861-9276.



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Tod Corrin is new DUSD board head

By Henry Veneracion, Staff Writer

DOWNEY—As expected, business executive, Downey Family YMCA stalwart, and ubiquitous 35-year Downey resident Tod Corrin Tuesday took the helm at the Downey Unified School District as board president, succeeding the equally successful 49-year old business executive, Willie Gutierrez. The deep-voiced Corrin won the District 2 board seat in 2003 vacated by Margo Hoffer.

To the tributes thrown Gutierrez' way by his colleagues praising his "excellent stewardship" during the past year, Downey Mayor Pro Tem Mario Guerra added a striking gavel-embossed plaque of appreciation, and called attention to the felicitous and harmonious relationship existing between the city and the district. With Councilmember Kirk Cartozian by his side, Guerra said this confers many benefits either way.

Corrin and Gutierrez were repeat winners of DUSD board seats last November, Corrin representing Trustee Area 2 and Gutierrez Trustee Area 3. Together with Donald LaPlante (Trustee Area 4) and D. Mark Morris (Trustee Area 6), who also won re-election, they were sworn in earlier by board member Barbara Samperi.

In his first official act as board president, Corrin presided over the distribution of responsibilities among the board members, including budget and audit committee assignments.

The Board then heard a presentation by Phil Davis, DUSD director of Support Programs, honoring Stephanie Hathaway, Certificated Employee in the area of instruction.

In his encomium, Davis said Hathaway, a physical education teacher who has worked for DUSD for 24 years, is "a high-caliber employee and a class act. She is a hard worker, focused, dedicated, loyal, and kind." Moreover, he said she is a study in tenacity and perseverance, meeting challenge after challenge in her desire to attain needed certifications and goals.

Among her many other surprising attributes, he said, is that she plays "a pretty mean 2nd trumpet" in her church's orchestra, adding: "Her willingness to serve and her generosity is what makes her so special."

Hathaway was nearly overcome with emotion as she took the podium. "I love coming to work everyday," she said, "and try to attend to each student's individual needs." Hers was a lengthy acceptance speech, full of references to her persevering efforts, both in her personal and professional life. "Indeed," she said at one point, "perseverance pays off."

In sum, she said, working for the district has "enabled me to make all my dreams come true."

The Board earlier heard a performance by the Lewis Elementary all-girls All Star Choir under the direction of Brad Mathews. Particularly pretty was their rendition of "My Favorite Things" from the "Sound of Music."

In other action, the Board:

- Accepted with gratitude donations in cash and in kind from several donors, including: a cash donation of \$7,500 for student field trips at Price Elementary School, from the Price Elementary School PTA; a donation of furniture worth \$1,103.80 from Delta Kappa Gamma to be used in the waiting area at TLC Family Resource Center, which also received a cash donation of \$10,000 in its support, from Kaiser Permanente; and a donation from Downey Federal Credit Union of 31 teacher enrichment grants valued at \$6,200;



Barbara Samperi, left, swears in Downey's recently re-elected Board of Education at Tuesday's board meeting. Photo by Stan Hanstad

- Authorized the payment of expenses for convention and conference attendance;
- Ratified the general agreement with Devereaux Texas Treatment Network for FY2007-08 (July 1/07-June 30/08);
- Ratified Special Education payments;
- Ratified purchase orders by the Purchasing Department;
- Ratified payments for hourly, overtime, and Civic Center work performed by classified personnel, Adult School, and Food Services for the month of October;
- Ratified B warrants for payment of authorized purchase obligations incurred by law or district policy for November;
- Ratified the various agreements between the Downey Adult School Career and Education Center and: the following offices/institutions providing a wide range of collaborative services: Marinello School of Beauty; CalState Polytechnic University; Dr. Garvey Medical Center; La Libertad Medical Clinic; Mark S. Linam D.P.M.; Renee Patel M.D., Inc; Dr. Henry Tsai Office; Vein and Cosmetic Center; Walgreens Pharmacy;
- Approved the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Program Plan for Gauldin Elementary School;
- Approved the revisions to the Warren High School 2006-07 Site Block Grant Expenditure Plan;
- Approved the various change orders for the Warren High School new library, classroom building and modernization projects in favor of the following vendors/suppliers: Junior Steel of Gardena, Moonlight Glass of San Marcos, Moore Twining Associates of Corona, and Continental Marble and Tile Co. of Corona, Hanan Construction of Pomona, and PW Construction of Glendora;
- Accepted as complete paving, concrete, electrical, painting, backhoe, and earthwork projects performed by various vendors;
- Approved the adjustments in the Cafeteria, Adult School, and General Fund restricted and unrestricted budgets reflecting decreases/decreases as the case may be;
- Approved the purchase of equipment, as listed, in accordance with established purchasing policies and regulations;

- Acknowledged the receipt of the claim submitted by Victor Jacobovitz, Esq., on behalf of Esther Carrera, and denied said claim, in accordance with Government Code Section 911-15 and 945;
 - Approved routine Personnel items until subsequent action is taken;
 - Authorized the services of teachers assigned a subject area not listed on their teaching credentials for the 2007-08 school year, pursuant to Education Code Sections 44256(b) and 44263;
 - Ratified the establishment of new positions with duties corresponding to similar current classifications;
 - Approved the changes to the duties of Purchasing Assistant as shown in attached duty statement effective Dec. 18, 2007;
 - Adopted the 2008-09 Course of Study for the middle and high schools;
 - Received the administrative report covering the 2007-08 First Period Interim Financial Report (as of Oct. 31, 2007), and approved the positive certification that DUSD can meet its financial obligation for the remainder of the 2007-08 fiscal year;
 - Approved the Successor Agreement to the Master Agreement with DEA/CTA/NEA, including a 4.4 percent salary increase effective Sept. 1, 2007, added to the salary schedules, rates, and the stipend factor rate enumerated in Appendix B of the agreement, and revised AR 4141 and AR 4141.1 accordingly;
 - Approved a 4.4 percent salary increase for Board Members, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, certificated and classified management, and confidential employees, effective July 1, 2007, and revised MAR 4141 and AR 5241 for the 2007-08 school year contingent upon LACOE (AB 1200) approval;
 - Reviewed and approved the proposed changes to BP 9390, Compensation of Board Members;
 - Declared that, as a result of financial uncertainties, negotiations, legislation, and other factors, all management including Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, confidential, and other unrepresented employee salaries are indefinite for 2007-08; and
 - Endorsed the actions taken by the superintendent on student cases.
- The next meeting of the Board of Education will be on Jan. 15 at the Gallegos Administration Center, 11627 Brookshire Ave., Downey.

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ACADEMY

Continued from page 1

operations, including how drivers are pulled over and for what reasons. He clarified police jargon (4-10, 3-12, etc.), most of which I'm embarrassed to say I've forgotten by now. But this topic also covered police pursuits, and when and how they are initiated.

Covering recruitment was Sgt. Randy Patrick, who emphasized that the Downey Police Department is hiring. But be forewarned: if you apply, your entire personal background will be thoroughly investigated and scrutinized, and you'll have to endure a physically-demanding police academy specifically designed to weed out those who lack a true commitment to becoming a police officer. Only the truly committed need apply.

Class 4: Detective Robert Del Rio (can I use his real name?) works undercover operations in Downey, busting drug deals and taking dope dealers off the streets. Using graphic pictures and presentation, he showed the academy the drastic consequences drugs can have on people.

Class 5: Sgt. Kathleen Mendoza is in charge of "internal affairs" at the police department, handling citizen complaints against police officers. Many times Mendoza reviews in-dash video recordings and testifies in court as an expert witness, giving an impartial analysis of her investigation.

Bob Weinrich is a senior code enforcement officer in Downey. Mostly working as a reactive force to quality of life complaints, Weinrich helps make sure businesses and residences are in compliance with the Downey Municipal Code. Weinrich also provided visual evidence of residential and commercial units that had been illegally altered, including garages converted into living quarters, a renovation banned by city law.

Class 6: Cpl. Wayne Raymond, perhaps the wittiest of all police officers, is a traffic enforcement officer, meaning he issues the bulk of the speeding tickets in Downey. You've probably seen him parked along Florence Avenue, where he catches motorists barreling through traffic over the 40 mph posted speed limit.

Class 7: The Lakers beat the Sacramento Kings, 101-97, at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas. Kobe Bryant doesn't play, fueling rumors he's on the verge of being traded.

Class 8: Detectives Maria Villegas and Sam Gatfield give a tour of the detective bureau and explain different types of crimes and how they are investigated. Detectives ultimately hope to file charges against a suspect, which is either accepted or rejected by the District Attorney.

Class 9: Supervisor Gail Fitzgerald and Forensic Specialist Ted Hiler are part of a four-person CSI (crime scene investigation) team. Responsible for much more than fingerprints (although a crucial clue in solving crimes), Downey's CSI team collects evidence where most people wouldn't think of looking. They're adept at examining hair follicles, teeth X-rays and video surveillance taps, searching for pieces of evidence others may have missed.

Class 10: Judge Ana Marie Luna gives the academy a behind-the-scenes tour of Downey Superior Court. Joined by other presiding judges, in addition to Detective Chris Hansen, Luna explains the differences between civil and criminal trials, felony and misdemeanor charges, and the roles of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and juries. The class included a rare tour of the underground jail that lies beneath the courthouse, where inmates are housed as they wait for their court proceedings. Splattered on the wall was graffiti scribbled in peanut butter.

Class 11: Detective Michael Parino says Downey is home to zero gangs, although gang members oftentimes cross into the city when they transfer to Downey's high schools. A riveting presentation to that point, the mayoral transition next door pulls me away.

Class 12: Graduation time! After 12 weeks of studious courses, I'm confident to say the Citizen's Academy came out a wiser, humbler and more informed group. Personally speaking, I can attest to its value as a community tool.

The class is free and will start again in January, although seats are limited. For information on attending, call the Downey Police Department at (562) 861-0771. I don't know if any seats are still available, but it would be worth a phone call to find out.

Temple hosts 'An Evening of Song'

DOWNEY – Temple Ner Tamid of Downey will be hosting "An Evening of Song" on Jan. 19 at 7 p.m.

The evening will feature ritual, stage and hit parade music, starring Cantor Ellen Jaffe-Gill, with special guests Hazzan Jay Harwitt and Soprano Leah Ellias.

General admission is \$18 and reserved seats are \$36. For information, call (562) 861-9276.



Bill Milburn was the guest performer at Monday's OASIS Christmas program, "An Old-Fashioned Christmas Together." He is shown with program instructor Harriett Paine.

Milburn shares Christmas poem

DOWNEY – Bill Milburn, well-known "song and dance man" with local dance troupe "The Vagabonds," was the guest performer at the OASIS Christmas program, "An Old-Fashioned Christmas Together," on Monday.

Harriet Paine, Downey Adult School coordinator, invited Milburn to read his Christmas poem, "Christmas Time," which he wrote many years ago. Mary Jane Prout also shared traditional and sacred music.



The Los Angeles Classic Chevy Club members recently donated numerous items, including Christmas toys; a three-month membership to the Downey YMCA; a cash donation from E.N. St. George DDS, Inc.; and gift certificates to Hometown Buffet, Del Rio Lanes, Carrows, and Rubio's Fresh Mexican Grill, to Downey Unified School District's True Lasting Connections Family Resource Center. Pictured are, left to right, Luz Perez, TLC coordinator; Claudia Garcia, TLC staff; Lori Roman, TLC staff; Dr. Robert Jagielski, director of pupil services; Peggy Fox, L.A. Classic Chevy Club member; and Ray Luna, L.A. Classic Chevy Club raffle chairman.

Downey Museum closed for holidays

DOWNEY – The Downey Museum of Art will be closed for the holidays and will reopen Feb. 1.

Staff, however, will be working at the museum and if a group is interested in visiting, they can make an appointment by calling (562) 861-0419.

The Poets' Corner

Christmas Time

When Christmas time is near,
We all anticipate
The spread of Christmas cheer -
And how we'll celebrate.

With tales of Santa Claus,
And lighted Christmas tree.
How Christ was born because
He came to set us free.

It's time to spread the news,
How Christ came down to earth.
Was born - King of the Jews,
A child of virgin birth.

He grew in human form,
The Son of God and man.
Great wonders He'd perform
For God's eternal plan.

At Christmas time on earth,
We give and receive.
We celebrate His birth,
With each new Christmas Eve.

We join the happy throng,
We lift our voice and sing.
Sing ev'ry Christmas song
In praise, to Christ our King.

Some day He'll come again,
But while we are apart,
Keep praising Him till then -
Keep Christmas in your heart.
--Bill Milburn,
Downey

Ithaca at last

happy he do you know
these two words you quiz
and without a pause I add
like Ulysses *comme Ulysse*

happy this day happy we
our meeting here as strangers
simple as a plume of cottage smoke
wondrous as finding sun-spun fleece

Ulysses has made his *beau voyage*
it rounds complete in us
while we mouth ancient verse
here beyond the Hesperides
--Lorine Parks,
Downey

READING

Continued from page 1

The community-wide reading event included programs about the book's themes. "Censorship Causes Blindness: Banned Books and Authors" featured a panel discussion with audience questions about banned books and freedom of expression. Science fiction author Greg Bear and Disney Imagineering designer Tim Delaney spoke on how Bradbury envisioned the future during a program called "Futurism and Science Fiction: Past, Present and Future." "The First Amendment: Who Needs It?" offered a lively discussion with Bradbury, C-SPAN CEO Brian Lamb, CSULB President Robert Maxson and others.

With these events, "Fahrenheit 451" became more than just a title on a required reading list: it became a catalyst for new ideas. This exciting lineup is only one example of how a "One Book" community reading project can inspire, challenge and motivate people of all ages to read and examine their role in the community.

What could happen if everyone in Downey reads the same book together?

Word of MOUTH
by Soheir S. Azer, D.D.S.

There is more to worry about than sugar content and weight gain when you drink soft drinks. Consider the fact that many carbonated sodas are nearly as corrosive to dental enamel as battery acid. While non-cola drinks are less acidic than cola drinks in general, the erosive potential of cola is ten times that of fruit juices during just the first three minutes of consuming them. When researchers weighed slices of enamel from freshly extracted teeth 48 hours after they were immersed in 20 different commercial soft drinks, they found that the samples lost more than 5% of their weight. If you must drink colas, use a straw and brush your teeth afterward.

This informative column has been brought to you in the interest of better dental health. Good experience with dentistry is based on making the right choice in a family dentist and in taking the right steps to keep dental costs at a minimum through self care at home between visits. We strive to teach good oral hygiene. In the long run you will have better dental health and, of course, spend far fewer dollars. Please call (562) 923-3714 to schedule an appointment. We're located at 10800 Paramount Blvd., Suite 307, where we're currently accepting new patients.

P.S. While battery acid has a pH of 1.0 and pure water has a pH (at room temperature) of 7.0, many sodas are in the 2.5 range.

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This & That

By Eric Pierce

Next week you will find a special treat tucked inside this newspaper, a year in review magazine highlighting many of the noteworthy events that transpired in Downey over the past year.

The magazine will be glossy covered, with full-color throughout. It should be a nice addition to the newspaper, and hopefully a memento our readers will save for a long time.

Without giving away too much information, we have included updates and exclusive documents and information on all the big stories in Downey (the Johnie's situation, the Carpenter's home, etc.). In fact, we had so many stories and pictures, not all of it fit into the magazine, meaning some of it will spill over into next week's newspaper.

Suffice it to say, next week's *Downey Patriot* should be fairly interesting.

In case you haven't heard, we're in the process of moving to bigger offices. Our new address, effective Jan. 2, will be 8301 E. Florence Ave., suite 100. Please feel free to drop by and say hello.

Thank you to the Downey Police Department for their hospitality and openness the past three months as they reinstated the Citizen's Academy. The course was an eye-opener for sure, and serves as an asset to the community. I'm just sorry I missed the shooting range session; I was hoping to release some aggression!

Maybe one day we can have a Public Information Officer at the police department. Our readers have been clamoring for the return of the crime blotter, which we heartily endorse.

If this newspaper eliminated the giant, overblown cartoon to the right of this column, would our readers be upset? I've been tinkering with the idea for a while now.

The cartoon has been a staple of the Editorial page for more than a decade, dating back to the design style of the Downey Eagle.

Sometimes I think that Dave Coverly, author of those cartoons, is running out of ideas.

Rest in peace to Downey Magazine, which recently ceased publication. Editor Joshua Stecker, an all-around nice guy, will bounce back with something new in the future, I'm sure.

Merry Christmas to all of our readers. Be safe and healthy.

Letters to the Editor:

Missing the Ayn Rand Institute

Dear Editor:

I think it would be beneficial for our community if you published more of Ayn Rand's writings. I know some Marxist criticized you previously for doing so, but free market capitalism and personal responsibility are what made our county great.

—Terry Pruitt,
Downey

Happy Winter Holidays

Dear Editor:

Mr. Tim Smick should attempt to be more specific in the future ("Some Questions for Team Kool-Aid," 12/7/07). First he says, "Someone is obviously responding to my letter supporting the troops and our commander in chief that was fairly elected by the 51 percent majority of our country, again." Then he says, "Oh, I know how crucial President Bush's National Guard record is..." Please request that Smick clarify this. Is he referring to our fairly elected commander-in-chief, or is he referring to President Bush? Which one?

"Is it possible that our intelligence gathering is working? Suddenly it doesn't sound so bad to run a little water over a savage murdering animals' nose for intelligence gathering does it? Listening to our phone conversations?" Kool-Aid drinking, terrorist-loving, Marxist-Leninist, American-hating traitor that I am, I naturally oppose these draconian measures that have been implemented by King George. That is why I am a proud member of two organizations that oppose this threat to civil liberties, those two groups being Move On PAC and of course, Elsa Van Leuven's "godless group of attorneys," the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) ("Bring Back Christmas, 12/7/07).

If not for the First Amendment, supported by the ACLU but despised by the Christian Right and Bill O'Lielly, we would not have the freedom to practice religion however we choose, that including the celebration of Christmas.

For example, it might interest Van Leuven to know that the holiday which she celebrates on Dec. 25 is not in fact Christmas, but rather the pagan holiday commemorating the beginning of the Winter Solstice. Christmas was originally celebrated on Jan. 6, but was changed to Dec. 25 to accommodate both the established tradition of paganism and the spread of the Christian religion throughout Rome.

That being said, Happy Winter Holidays.

—Julian E. Gutierrez,
Downey



Letters to the Editor:

Power play of City Council

Dear Editor:

The action by the City Council to overturn 50-year plus rule of rotation prompts this letter. There has to be a hidden agenda otherwise Councilperson Bayer would be mayor pro tem as she is rightfully entitled.

I have never seen a power play like this in my 45 years, as of December 7th, residency. I have had an office in Downey for over 38 years. I wonder what will be next if the council wins in the coming election to reverse term limits.

In the past I have been opposed to term limits as I have seen outstanding councilpersons termed out but in view of this action I fear Downey may be headed toward the corrupt governance we have seen in neighboring cities Bell Gardens, South Gate and Lynwood.

— Don Johnston,
Downey

Prescription for disaster

Dear Editor:

With the recent publication of the Mitchell Report on baseball, perhaps the public should now question political candidates whether they have or are now using HGH or steroids for reasons other than healing their bodies, of course.

— John Lacey,
Downey

No 'progress' for Johnie's Broiler

Dear Editor:

Exactly what "progress" has the City made in entering an agreement with the owner of Johnie's Broiler wherein it is given control over development of the site? The City already has such control in the planning, architectural review, permitting, construction and occupancy of any structure developed on the property. Furthermore, the City has had control over abatement of building and fire code hazards at the site since it stopped demolition a year ago.

The City has allowed by its own moratorium on development at the site, and now through an agreement with the owner, the unlawful continuance of hazards to public safety, as well as a terrible blight at a gateway to our community. I'm not an expert in restoration of architecturally significant structures, but I don't think it takes one to conclude there is nothing left at the site of Johnie's Broiler to restore, regardless of the agreement the City has with the owner.

Reporting the continued abdication of the City's authority, and responsibility, to abate the public safety hazards the nearly demolished building at the site poses as "progress," is ridiculous political pandering by Council to the vocal minority in the community who wish to force either the owner, or the City, to restore what ultimately is a failed business.

It's time for Council and staff to do their jobs in protecting the community at large, by ordering the owner to complete demolition immediately.

—Brian Heyman,
Downey

Letters to the editor may be submitted by writing to *The Downey Patriot*, 11525 Downey Ave., Suite A, Downey CA 90241 or by e-mail to downeypatriot@yahoo.com. Letters may be edited for style and/or content. Letters must include a full name and address for verification.

The sound of our city

Dear Editor:

Well, I really don't know what I thought I was getting into when I accepted an invitation to attend the Warren High School Winter Concert Tuesday (Dec. 11) at the Downey Theatre. I've been out of the DUSD loop for lots of years – my oldest child is 52 years old, my youngest is 47 years old, I'm a grandmother of four, and no one except me even lives near Downey. What was I getting myself into?

What I got was a thrilling, delightful, entertainment surprise. I was treated to nearly 200 high school students on stage dressed in formal clothing – young men in black ties, white shirts and black suits, and young women in long black dresses – creating musical gifts for us, their audience.

Their department was impeccable, right at attention, sitting – or standing – up straight performing as professionals whether in the formal Symphony Band (only one cello and one bass violin), or swinging the house down with two groups of jazz. I invited the person beside me to jitter bug, but he declined, "Really! Someone my age dancing in the aisle. And with my arthritis and all. What a gas!" (If you haven't heard that phrase before then you are just too darn young).

This spectacle was all directed by David Niemeyer. I understand these folks arrive at school to rehearse at 6:45 a.m. I'd almost forgotten there was a 6:45 a.m. too.

I was so impressed and downright curious, I decided to buy my own ticket and attend tonight's (Dec. 12) Winter Concert by the Downey High School Concert Band. I wanted to see what they could do. And they did. I am delighted to say the quality and fun they generated inspires in me, a wonderment that we could be blessed with two talented and well-trained high school music programs. Downey's presentation included a women's choir – dressed in formal gowns – a coed vocal jazz group, a formal concert band, as well as two jazz groups full of energy and excitement. The entourage was also around 200 high school students. They have been invited to perform for a second year at the Disney Concert Hall with two other high school groups. Corneliu Olariu (aka Mr. "O") is their director. I imagine they also have to arrive at 6:45 a.m. to present with such professionalism.

Did you hear about this? I don't remember reading about ticket availability. Where the heck have I been? Both houses were almost full. What a blessing of kids and music. Both schools will be presenting a Spring concert in May.

I have been part of the Downey Symphonic Society and Downey Symphony Guild for quite a while now as we promote our wonderful symphony and Music in the Schools program.

I've often wondered if anything was getting through. (to quote John Adams in the musical "1776," "Is anybody there? Does anybody care?"). Could it be that these accomplished young people were influenced by the in-school educational programs presented live to every DUSD third and fifth graders by the Downey Symphony Quintet? Or could some of them have been impressed by the specially prepared full Downey Symphony Orchestra performances they heard at the theatre?

Whether or not doesn't really matter (except it would be good to know for those who work at it). What matters is that the music is. What matters is that there are teachers to spread this joy. What matters is that there are listeners to hear it. What matters is that together we can make the joyful noise and are blessed as we do. This letter both honors our young people's musical gifts and John Hume, whose birthday was on Dec. 15. He loved teaching young people and creating meaningful experiences for them to learn from.

—Pauline Hume,
Downey

The Downey Patriot



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SPEED BUMP



DAVE COVERLY



On This Day...

- Dec. 21, 1620: Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower land at Plymouth, Mass.
- 1913: The first crossword puzzle is published in "New York World," an early American newspaper.
- 1937: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" holds its premiere in Los Angeles.
- 1945: Gen. George S. Patton dies in Germany from injuries sustained in a car accident. He was 60.
- 1967: Louis Washkansky, the world's first heart transplant recipient, dies 18 days after surgery.
- 1968: Apollo 8, the first manned space mission to the moon, launches from the Kennedy Space Center. Its three-person crew became the first humans to orbit the moon.
- 1970: Elvis Presley meets with President Richard Nixon to discuss the fight against drugs.
- 1978: Serial killer John Wayne Gracy, Jr. is arrested in Des Plaines, Ill.
- 1988: A terrorist sets off a bomb onboard Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland, killing 270 people.

Downey Community Calendar

Events For December

- Sun. Dec. 23: "Guest Appreciation Day," Downey Jiffy Lube, 10 a.m.
- Wed. Dec. 26: "Holiday Haven" Program Begins, Various Parks, 12:30 p.m.

City Meetings

- 1st Tuesdays, 6:15 p.m.: Redevelopment Project Area Committee, Cormack Meeting Room at Downey Library.
- 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.: Planning Commission, Council Chamber at City Hall.
- 1st Tuesday, 4:00 p.m.: Recreation and Community Services Commission, Council Chamber, City Hall.
- 1st Thursday, 9 a.m.: Traffic Committee, Training Room, Second Floor of City Hall.
- 2nd & 4th Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.: City Council/Community Development Commission, Council Chamber.
- 2nd & 4th Wednesday, 6 p.m.: Design Review Board, Council Chamber at City Hall.
- 3rd Thursday, 3:30 p.m.: Parking Place Commission, Second Floor Training Room at City Hall

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

Mondays

- 6:30 p.m.: Metropolitan Masonic Lodge #352 dinner, mtg., for information call 426-6786.
- 6:30 p.m.: Overeaters Anonymous, at Downey Regional Med. Center Conf. Room A, for info. call 426-6786.
- 1st Mon., 4 p.m.: 2nd Century Foundation, at City Hall, 1st floor, call 927-9790.
- 2nd Mon., 11 a.m.: American Legion Auxiliary #270, at United Methodist Church, for info. call 923-2481.
- 2nd Mon., 3 p.m.: Keep Downey Beautiful, at City Hall, for more information call 904-7159.
- 3rd Mon., 7 p.m.: American Legion Post 270, Los Amigos Country Club, call 869-1053.
- 4th Mon., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Numismatists, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.

Tuesdays

- 9 a.m.: Downey Bocce Club, at Apollo Park, for information call Vince Zoida at (714) 761-4439.
- 9:30 a.m.: Downey Seniors Club, at Apollo Park, for information call Nadine Morris at 923-9422.
- 9:30 a.m.: Adventure with the Bible, at the First Baptist Church call 928-4153.
- 12 p.m.: Rotary Club, at Rio Hondo, for information call Darren Dunaway at 806-5400.
- 12 p.m.: Exchange Club of Downey, at Sizzler, for information call Don Hollister at 927-5871.
- 6:00 p.m.: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, for info call 928-2658.
- 7 p.m.: Boy Scout Troop 2, at Downey United Methodist Church, for information call 869-6478.
- 7 p.m.: Boy Scout Troop 441, at Apollo Park Activities Room, for information call 923-3659.
- 7:30 p.m.: Southland Harmony Chorus of Sweet Adelines, at Downey's Woman's Club, for information call 947-6802.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 7:30 a.m.: Chamber "Rise&Shine" Networkers, at Nordic Fox. for info. call (562) 923-2191.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 6 p.m.: Sertoma Club, at Bakers Square. for information call (562) 927-6438.
- 2nd Tues., 7 p.m.: Downey Fly Fishers, at Apollo Park, for information call 943-3904.
- 3rd Tues., 7:30 p.m.: Writer's Workshop West, at at Downey High School library, for info call 862-3106.
- Last Tues., 11:00 a.m.: Los Companeros Service Club, at Los Amigos Country Club, for info call 863-1549.

Wednesdays

- 7 a.m.: Kiwanis Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center. Call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.
- 1 p.m.: Women's Bocce Club, for information call 869-8782.
- 1st Weds., 10 a.m.: Woman's Club of Downey, for information call Barbara Briley-Beard 869-7618.
- 1st Weds., 11:30 a.m.: Downey Coordinating Council, at Community Center, for information call 923-4357.
- 1st Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Stamp Club, at Maude Price School cafeteria, for information call 928-3028.
- 1st Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Emblem Club #309, at Downey's Elks Lodge, for information call 868-4386.
- 2nd Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Model A Club, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, for information call 928-4132.
- 2nd Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Sister Cities Ass'n, at Maude Price School, Call 862-7197.
- 2nd Weds., 11:45 a.m. - Downey Christian Women's Club, at Los Amigos CC, Call 927-8488.
- 2nd & 4th Weds., 11:00 a.m. - AARP, at Barbara J. Riley CC, Call Lorene Frazier 861-6075.
- 3rd Weds., - Downey Dog Obedience Club Apollo Park.
- 3rd Weds., 6 p.m. - American Business Women's Association, Rio Hondo Country Club, Call Barbara Carlson 863-2192.
- 4th Weds., 12:00 noon: Retired Federal Employees, at Furman Park West Bldg., call 943-5513.
- Wed. & Fri., 10:15 a.m.: Senior Bingo, at Apollo Park, for information call 904-7223.

Thursdays

- 7:30 a.m.: Soroptimist Int'l of Downey, for information, call Pat Heineke, 904-3534.
- 7:30 a.m.: Connections Networking, at Nordic Fox 10924 Paramount, for information call 869-1414.
- 12 p.m.: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 923-0971.
- 12 p.m.: Downey Christian Businessmen's Committee, for information call 928-4153.
- 12 p.m.: Optimist Club of Downey, at Sambi's, for information call Steve Allen at 622-7655.
- 12:30 p.m.: Take off Pounds Sensibly, at First Christian Church, call (800) 932-8677.
- 6:30 p.m.: Downey United Masonic Lodge # 220, 8244 3rd St., Call 862-4176.
- 7 p.m.: Troop 351, Boy Scouts of America, at First Baptist Church, for information call 776-3388.
- 4th Thurs., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Historical Society programs, at Community Center. Call 862-2777.
- 2nd Thurs., 7:30 p.m.: Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club, for more information call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.

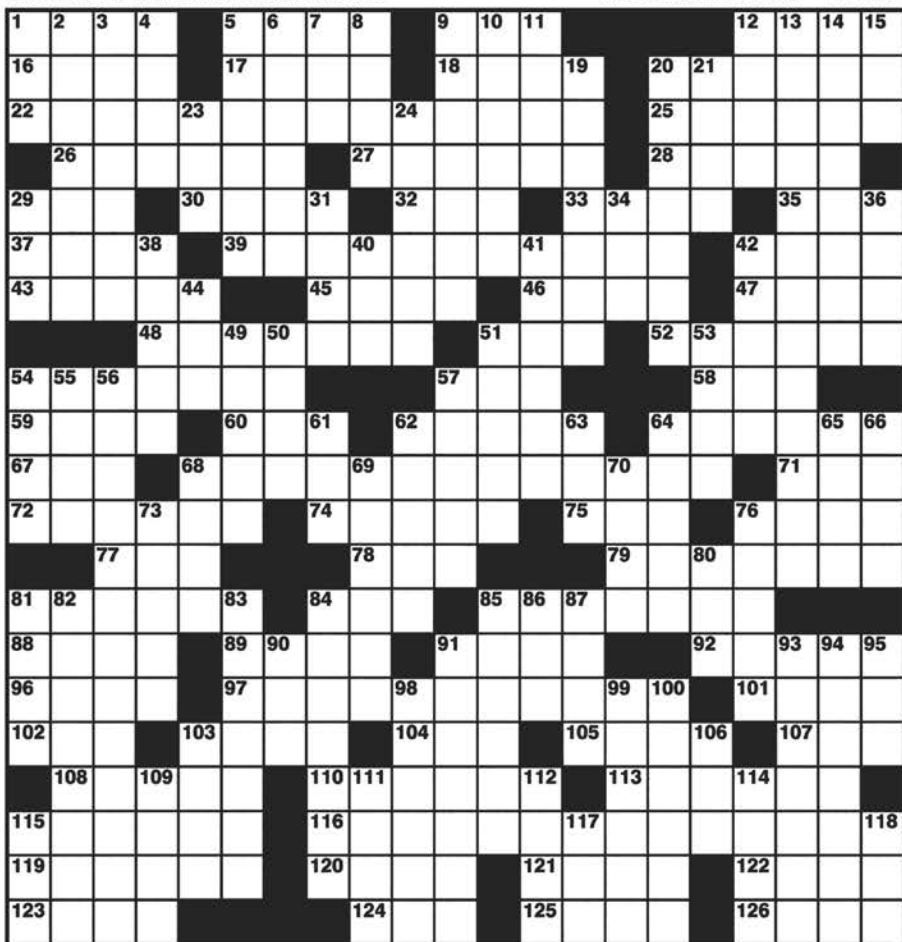
Fridays

- 7:30 a.m.: Pro Networkers, at Mimi's Cafe, for information call Barbara Briley Beard at 869-7618
- 3rd Fri., 8:30 a.m.: Women's "In His Glory" Ministry at Los Amigos C. C. (562) 622-3785.

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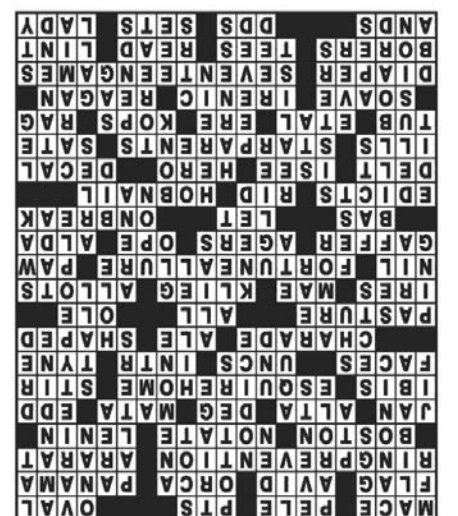
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You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at his e-mail address: StanXwords@aol.com. Or write him at P.O. Box 69, Massapequa Park, NY 11762, Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you'd like a reply.

MACE (1 Across) is produced by grinding the layer between a nutmeg shell and its outer husk. The name of the Italian white wine SOAVE (108 Across) literally means "sweet" in Italian. Appropriately, JIF peanut butter (29 Down) is owned by jelly giant J.M. Smucker.



Buying smart, safe toys this holiday season

CONTRIBUTED BY LAKEWOOD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

LAKWOOD – Skates, tricycles, toy trucks and cars, wagons and balls are among children's favorite playthings. But in one year, according to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates, there were 150,000 toy-related injuries serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment.

Falls are the most frequent kind of accident, but many serious injuries result from children swallowing small parts or placing tiny toys in noses or ears, from exploding gas-powered toys, from flammable products, and from sharp edges, stressed Dr. Joseph Oh, a board-certified pediatrician practicing at Lakewood Regional Medical Center.

Each year, some 5,000 new toys enter the marketplace. The holiday season finds over 150,000 different kinds of toys for sale in approximately 1 million stores. Despite the efforts of manufacturers, retailers, safety inspectors, and others, it is impossible to examine every toy. But it is possible for parents and other relatives to check every new toy they buy and every old toy around the house for possible hazards.

Parents should consider their child's skill level when buying a toy, Oh said. Teddy bears and other stuffed toys that have eyes, buttons or noses that can be pulled off pose a choking hazard to young children. Toys with

small parts should be kept away from young children and infants because of their tendency to explore objects by mouthing them.

Coins, marbles, plastic bags, Styrofoam objects and balloons should be kept away from children under 4 years old. Safe toys shouldn't have parts with sharp points or edges or parts less than 2 1/4 inches long and 1 1/4 inches in diameter.

Parents should be especially cautious when children have projectile toys, such as dart guns. When buying toys look for quality, design and construction in toys for all ages. Sharp points such as wires inside a stuffed toy may stab or poke if exposed.

Become a label reader. Look for age recommendations on the packaging and safety labels, such as flame retardant/flame resistant on fabric products and maintain toys, periodically checking for breakage and wear.

Toys with long strings or cords may be dangerous for infants and young children because the cord can become wrapped around a child's neck, said Oh.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission publishes a pamphlet designed to educate about the right toys for the right age. It says infants enjoy bright primary colors, human faced features or simple rattles large enough not to become lodged in the infant's throat.

How to avoid buying dangerous toys

Magnets: Check toys for magnets. Any kinds of magnets in your toys should put the toy high on the dangerous toys list. If the magnets are completely covered and encased within heavy duty material which cannot be chewed or splintered, it's probably alright. If you really want to play it safe, then take away any magnetic toys from your kids.

Lead: Many dangerous toys have high levels of lead in the surface paint. Lead is dangerous because it is poisonous. I've heard of lead paint level detectors which tell you the amount of lead in paint.

Small/Loose Parts: Most dangerous toys have small parts which can be detached and ingested. Check all toys for loose or small parts which you feel may be dangerous to your kids. Either remove the part from the toy, or take the entire toy away.

Age Appropriateness: It's dangerous for your kids to play with toys which are meant for older children. This is especially true where infants and toddlers are concerned. It's difficult to keep dangerous toys away from younger siblings.

Recalled Toys: It's important to check for toy recalls as we've found out recently. You can visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission website and check the list of toy recalls from time to time.

Dr. Joseph Oh is a board-certified pediatrician practicing at Lakewood Regional Medical Center.

Winter Worship Directory

Happy Holidays
From all of us at
The Downey Patriot

Worship Our Lord
as we Celebrate His Birth
Christmas Eve
December 24, 2007 at 5:30pm
Messiah Lutheran Church
10711 Paramount Boulevard, Downey
(562)923-1215

Please Join us for Christmas At Christ
Lutheran Church Christmas Eve 7:00
pm Christmas Day 10:00 am
7707 Florence Ave.
Downey 90240

A Taste of Judaism
What is Judaism about? How do Jews pray?
How old is Judaism? Is it only a religion?
Are you curious? The entire community is invited to this no charge friendly discussion series held at
Temple Ner Tamid
January 20, 27 & February 3, 2008
Led by: Rabbi Len Muroff & Cantor Ellen Jaffe-Gill
Call 562-861-9276 & Make a Reservation
10629 Lakewood Boulevard, Downey
(Freeway close, north of Firestone Boulevard)
Temple Ner Tamid of Downey is a Friendly, Warm Reform Congregation

Downey Seventh-day Adventist Church
Celebrate Christmas with us
Saturday, Dec. 22 at 11:00AM
Seasonal Music, a Drama,
& a Word from Pastor Mitch
9820 Lakewood Blvd. - 562.869.6013
www.downeychurch.org

Christmas Season Services
Christmas Eve Services- December 24, 2007
Family Service - 6:00 pm
Featuring "A Charlie Brown Christmas"
Play performed by Trinity's Youth!
Candlelight Service - 11 pm
Everyone Welcome
New Year's Eve Service December 31, 2007
7pm in the Sanctuary
Sunday Services for December 23 and 30
9:30 a.m.
Trinity Lutheran Church
11507 Studebaker Road, Norwalk, 562.864.3713

Calvary Chapel Downey
www.calvarydowney.org

Merry Christmas
Monday, December 24th
Everyone is Welcome to Our
Christmas Eve Candlelight
Communion Service
at 6:00pm
Childcare Available

Christmas is the day we have set aside to remember the birth of the Savior.
In this busy world we live, it is all too easy to lose sight of what really matters in life. We would encourage you to slow down this season and take time to acknowledge the Christ of Christmas. Why? Because without Jesus, not only would there be no Christmas, but there would be no hope, no forgiveness of sins, no salvation, no eternal life.

The Bible teaches us all that all mankind has been separated from God and lost in sin since Adam. Therefore, just as sin entered through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

Because God loves us, He has a very serious solution. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8) For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Sin is a very serious problem. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Won't you take time right now to thank God for His gift of life through Jesus Christ? Simply pray, "Thank you God for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sin. Jesus, from this day forth, I trust in you as my Savior and Lord. Forgive me of my sins, fill me with your Holy Spirit. Take my life and make it yours."

Weekly services: Sunday 8:30am, 10:30am, 6pm; Wednesday 7pm • Children's and Youth Ministries for all ages
12808 Woodruff Ave. at Imperial Hwy • (562)803-5631 • ccd@calvarydowney.org • www.calvarydowney.org

Have a Christ Holiday Centered Season!

Downey Memorial Christian Church
We invite you to join us
Dec. 23, 10:30 am
Christmas Sunday
Dec. 24, 7:00 pm
Christmas Eve Festival
of Carols and Lights
8441 Florence Avenue, Downey * 562-869-7291
Find us at www.downeymemorial.org

Christmas Eve Worship Service
Monday, December 24th
6:00 pm
Downey First Christian Church
Iglesia Cristiana de Downey

You are invited to come join family and friends in the community as we remember the birth of Jesus Christ and celebrate together the real reason for the Christmas Season. This year our Christmas Eve will be filled with candlelight, communion, music and a message - followed by a time of drinks and dessert. This worship service is a great opportunity for the family to spend time together at church during the holiday season - and for your convenience, quality childcare will be provided for birth through preschool-aged children.

10909 S. New Street Downey, CA 90241
(one block north of the Krikorian Theater)
562-862-2438 (english) 562-862-7418 (español)

CHRISTMAS at
Revolution
CHURCH

Sunday, December 23rd [10am]
Columbus High School in Downey
[12330 Woodruff Ave. in Downey - corner of Imperial & Woodruff]

High-energy Christmas music, a riveting drama,
an engaging film, and an inspiring message!

Exciting children's program for birth-5th graders!

562.546.0012 - www.iNeedARevolution.com

FPC Downey
A Multicultural Congregation

To Know Christ and Make Christ Known
Christmas Musical 6:00 p.m. Sunday the 16th
Christmas Eve 5:30 p.m. Monday the 24th
Children's Service
Christmas Eve 11:00 p.m. Monday the 24th
Candlelight service
10544 Downey Avenue at Seventh Street

Dr. Batra's focus energizes Kaiser Permanente

BY HENRY VENERACION, STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY – When New Delhi native and gastroenterology specialist Binesh Batra, M.D., first declared that he wanted to be a doctor, his father told him to try to be the best doctor in his field. Dr. Batra has tried to live up to that shining ideal ever since.

To enter medical school in India, a country of more than one billion people, Batra was one of 300 who bested 30,000 aspirants in the yearly competitive exams. After getting his medical degree from the University of Delhi, he chose to come to the U.S. in 1985 because “this is where it’s at.”

He took his residency in internal medicine at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, an affiliate of Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, N.Y. He was also a clinical fellow in gastroenterology. His stay was six years. He joined Kaiser Permanente Bellflower in 1991.

In the same six years he’s been with K-P, he has served as assistant chief of internal medicine and physician lead for gastroenterology (1996-2006), regional chair for gastroenterology (2001-2006), as well as chaired such key medical center committees as the Bioethics Committee and the Drug Utilization Action Team (DUAT). He has also led efforts in developing region-wide protocols on colorectal cancer screening and surveillance, the use of nurse practitioners and physicians’ assistants in managing Hepatitis C, and preprocedural consults by nurse practitioners in medical offices.

Meanwhile, he attended USC’s Management Development Program from 1997-98, its Advanced Management Program in 2003, and won a 2003-05 CHCF Health Care Leadership Fellowship from UC-San Francisco.

He had been serving for three years as assistant area medical director for the Southern California Permanente Medical Group when he was tapped as area medical director in January.

Batra says, as an administrator, his focus is on six major guidelines: “hassle-free” member access, service with courteous and compassionate care, the hiring and retention of talent, better utilization of hospital resources, a culture of quality, and patient safety. These emphases grew organically, he says, out of his personal experience, observation and study, and in answer to today’s members’ medical needs.

Using his wife’s ordeal as a cancer survivor for a reference point, he asked himself how a medical center can provide better medical care to patients while in hospital. His six guidelines were the result. “At this medical center,” he says, “we have gone beyond treating member-patients with

courtesy. We’ve become helpful.”

For long, hospitals (and, for that matter, clinics) have been viewed as impersonal, uncaring, fast turnover-minded places. Batra wants to change this perception. “To begin with,” he says, “Kaiser Permanente has always been known to provide honest, ethical, good medical care, and this is why I joined the group. In addition, K-P stresses a ‘work-life balance’ attitude.” The thrust of the whole medical profession, he says, may be boiled down to two functions: prevention and cure.

“U.S. News & World Report” has ranked Kaiser Permanente as the “top Medicare health plan in California and in the top five Medicare health plans nationwide.” Just recently, the group announced that the 2007 HMO Quality Report Card just released by the California Office of the Patient Advocate awarded K-P health plans from Northern and Southern California three excellent ratings for clinical care—the only health plans to achieve an excellent (4-star) rating in the report. The 4-star rating came in the categories of heart care, mental health and sexually transmitted infections.

Batra says the level of talent and quality of care at Kaiser Permanente is the equal of that found at Cedars-Sinai Hospital today.

A Kaiser Permanente brochure describes its new \$500-million facility, when completed, will boast a “352-bed hospital housing a complete range of hospital services, including but not limited to general acute, intensive care and perinatal beds, an 85-room emergency department, birthing services and operating room services; 82 departments and all sub-specialty services associated with a full service medical center, including cardiology, gastroenterology, neurology, nuclear medicine, oncology, orthopedics, surgery and surgical urgent care, among others.”

“I like Downey,” Batra says. “It’s pretty, it’s safe, it’s picturesque.” A hard and conscientious worker, he often does 12-hour, if not 14-hour, days. So his clinical skills won’t atrophy, Batra spends five percent of his working time in clinical practice.

In addition to traveling, he enjoys gourmet food and classical (both Western and Indian) music, as well as Bollywood films. Post-JamesClavell days, he devours the works of Robert Ludlum and the like, but he says his reading now tends to, understandably, leadership development literature.

Direct, to-the-point, and blessed with a refreshing sense of humor, Batra’s favorite mantra is “X for work, Y for play, and Z for ‘keep your mouth shut.’” It has worked wonders for him so far.



New & noteworthy titles at the Downey City Library

• **“Alvin and the Chipmunks: a Chipmunk Christmas.”** This 2006 DVD features 11 most requested songs performed by your favorite Christmas critters.

• **“Angela and the Baby Jesus”** by Frank McCourt. Six-year-old Angela is worried for the baby Jesus on the altar of St. Joseph’s Church in Limerick, Ireland.

• **“Christmas Catastrophe”** by Geronimo Stilton. When a ski trip lands Geronimo in the hospital, he thinks it will be the worst Christmas ever. But his family and friends have something else in mind.

• **“The Eight Nights of Chanukkah”** by Leslea Newman. The wondrous days of Chanukkah come to life through the eyes of a young child.

• **“Feliz Navidad, Gus!”** by Jacklyn Williams. Waiting in line to see Santa, Gus the hedgehog wants to make sure that St. Nick will remember him and his special Christmas wish.

• **“Frosty the Snowman”** by Jack Rollins. The perfect read-aloud for the holiday season, this charming picture book features the songs about the snowman that magically comes to life.

• **“Good King Wenceslas”** by John M. Neale. This lovely picture book illustrates the original carol about a tenth-century Bohemian king who wants to share the joy of Christmas.

• **“Great Joy”** by Kate Di Camillo. Lovely illustrations by Bagram Ibatouline set the stage for this 1940’s story about a compassionate child who wants to share the joy of Christmas.

• **“Here Comes Santa Claus”** by Gene Autry. This engaging picture book includes the lyrics to the singing cowboy’s classic tune as jolly old St. Nick heads, “right down Santa Claus Lane.”

• **“Olive, the Other Reindeer”** by Vivian Walsh. Thinking that “all of the other reindeer” she hears people singing about include her, Olive the dog reports to the North Pole to help Santa on Christmas Eve.

Visit the library at 11121 Brookshire Ave. or www.downeylibrary.org or call (562) 904-7360 ext. 3 to check out or reserve these new titles.

A ‘Spectacular’ display of Christmas spirit

BY BROOKE KARL, STAFF WRITER

Christmas has always been one of my family’s favorite holidays. Of course, seeing our extended family and giving and receiving gifts is a highlight, but for us, what we do together always seems to make each Christmas season better than the last.

Every year we decorate the house and pick out a Christmas tree together, and every year, we gather to watch some of our favorite Christmas movies: “A Christmas Story,” “Christmas Vacation,” “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” and the last 20 minutes of “Home Alone” (if you haven’t seen the last 20 minutes of this movie, you need to – it’s hilarious).

But this year, we decided to do something we’ve never done before – see the “Radio City Christmas Spectacular,” starring the Radio City Rockettes, who began performing in 1925 as the “Sixteen Missouri Rockets.” Since then, the group has increased in number to 36 and is known as the Rockettes.

When we caught wind that the world-renowned group would be performing at the Orange County Performing Artscenter, we thought of no better way to celebrate the season than to see the high-kicking performers we watched on television growing up.

The show was incredible, overflowing with song and dance, vibrant in costume and color, and loaded with Christmas spirit. Santa Claus ran the show, but the Rockettes made the show. Nowhere is their skill better showcased than in “The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers,” a routine the group has performed every year since 1933. In crisp unison, the “toy soldiers” turned and marched, concluding with a slow-motion, domino-like fall.

As the evening was coming to an end, the “Radio City Christmas Spectacular” concluded in a way we least expected. There were no sequined costumes, or tapping toes, or dancing snowmen. Instead, there were people in robes, carrying staffs and directing camels and donkeys. As they made their way across the stage, the story of Christ’s birth was being narrated. As they all gathered at the center of the stage around Baby Jesus, the following was being read:

“He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never wrote a book, or held an office. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. While He was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends deserted Him. He was turned over to His enemies, and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had – His coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave. Two thousand years have come and gone, and today He is the central figure for much of the human race. All the armies that ever marched and all the navies that ever sailed and all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as this ‘One Solitary Life.’”

Finally, a refreshing reminder of what Christmas is all about.

Downey Family YMCA

School Age Child Care

562 - 862 - 4201

The Downey Family YMCA has a program that to fits your child care needs!

School Age Child Care

Kindergarten—8th grades Monday—Friday 6:30am to 6:30pm

Child Care includes age specific activities that enhance your youths after school hours.

Homework Help * Special Events * Afternoon Snack * Arts & Crafts * Transportation * Character Development * Holiday Care

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- Science

Financial Assistance Available

Enrolling Now!

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[Enroll at the Main YMCA branch]

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities

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A special treat aboard a historic 130’ tallship
Enjoy a picnic buffet and 3 hour sail on

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19th
10 am - 1 pm
Adults \$35 • Children \$25

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Please don't forget.

Please help poor and suffering souls in our community. Your gift today will let someone in desperate need know they haven't been forgotten.

This Christmas Remember to give.

YES, I want to help provide food, shelter and hope for needy people in our community.

\$20 to help feed a hungry person.

\$35 to help provide clothing for needy children.

\$50 to help feed and shelter a hurting family.

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562.622.3999 ALL STADIUM SEATING

ALL DIGITAL PRESENTATION

CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR PG (11:15, 1:50, 4:30, 7:25, 10:05)

NATIONAL TREASURE: BOOK OF SECRETS PG (10:00, 10:45, 1:00, 1:45, 4:00, 4:45, 7:00, 7:45, 10:00, 10:45)

P.S. I LOVE YOU PG-13 (11:00, 1:55, 4:45, 7:40, 10:40)

WALK HARD: THE DEWEY COX STORY PG (10:05, 12:25, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:25)

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS PG (10:10, 11:30, 12:30, 2:00, 3:00, 4:30, 5:30, 7:00, 8:00, 9:30, 10:30)

I AM LEGEND PG-13 (11:05, 12:50, 1:50, 3:35, 4:40, 6:30, 7:30, 9:20, 10:20)

THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG-13 (10:50, 1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:55)

Times for Friday-Monday, December 21-24, 2007

Bargain Matinee () Advance ticket sales
Special Engagement/No Passes * www.kptmovies.com

Clean athletes a rarity in sports these days

BY SCOTT COBOS, CONTRIBUTOR

The word "bombshell" is one way to describe the recent revelations that were described in Senator George Mitchell's performance-enhancing drugs investigation report. Another word is "shocking" and another is "inexplicable." One word that has been kicked around a little bit is "expected."

Is it of any surprise that athletes such as Jason Giambi or Barry Bonds were included in this report? Giambi admitted to it and Bonds might as well admit it now that he's in court for perjury and obstruction of justice. Now, it all came of shock when we saw Dodger icons such as Eric Gagne and Paul Lo Duca on the list.

It was even more heartbreaking when we read the notes to the suppliers. Such notes as "Sorry! But for some reason they sent the check back to me. I haven't been able to call you back because my phone is TOAST! I have a new # it is...Please leave your # again because I lost all of my phonebook with the other phone. Thanks, Paul," drove the dagger of deception deeper through the faithful hearts in Los Angeles.

Even more painful is to know that all we stared in amazement during the glory years of Gagne and it turned out to be fake. Eighty-four consecutive saves? Forget about it. Guns-N-Roses' "Welcome to the Jungle" blaring through the speakers at Chavez Ravine? I'd be happy never hearing that song again for it truly is "Game Over" for Gagne now.

I'm not even going to start in on Roger Clemens. That's devastating in so many ways it hurts to talk about.

Let's play by the numbers. According to the report, 115,000 pages of documentation were provided to the investigation panel by the commissioner's office. Over 20,000 electronic documents were also received from the commissioner's office spanning conversations between trainers and upper echelon administrators about players in question.

Not only that, 86 players were connected to performance-enhancing drugs, 64 major league players connected to steroid use or possession, 31 all-star players were named and seven league MVPs came out of this group, according to the report.

All the evidence is practically there. With thousands of pages of documents, not to mention all the photocopied checks and notes from players who either helped deal steroids or took them for self use, the most amazing statistic is this: *Zero* active players contacted investigators after a memorandum was sent to each asking if they had any relevant information regarding their investigation.

When we stand back and look a little harder, it's difficult to believe but easy to understand that we put a veil of ignorance over our own eyes. Deep down inside we knew a lot of these elite athletes were doing some kind of performance enhancing drugs. And it's not just baseball. It's track and field with Marion Jones and her stripped medals. It's football with their suspended players. It may as well be hockey, soccer, basketball and any other sport you can imagine.

A great question was brought up in a casual conversation amongst co-workers. Are there any clean athletes out there any more? And if so, where are they and what sport are they playing?

Last I remember, ping pong was a relatively clean sport. I can't see any gained advantage from bulking up to the size of a 747. Maybe curling, you know the game with brooms, ice and a huge puck, is clean. Heck, you can't cheat if you're taking steroids in the World Series of Poker.

I think you'd also have a hard time gaining any type of advantage if you're playing polo. Well, I guess if you inject your horse with it you could help yourself. Darts is another safe bet, or maybe Late Night Blackjack on NBC.

OK, enough joking around. In all seriousness, the professional athletes' actions are all in arrogance and greed. Another point on the average could mean thousands of dollars or a promotion to the big leagues. Another second shaved off the clock could mean the difference between a gold medal and a silver medal.

Like I said, it's all about greed and arrogance. So what is the opposite of this whirlwind attitude that is professional sports? It's our youth. The purest athletes are our children. Now, I'm not going to give in to naivety and say there isn't cheating in youth sports, but I will say I have a love for their way of cheating.

Instead of popping a human growth hormone pill, they slide a little dirtier than normal breaking up a double play. As a replacement for spraying aerosol steroids under their tongue, they spin, hooking a defender with their off-arm on the baseline in a basketball game. As a substitute for a syringe and some anabolic steroids, they learn the technique of the chop block in football.

Although dirty in technique, these players are our purest athletes. Give them credit for learning the way to play their respective sport. They don't take the easy way out. They live by a no-guts-no-glory motto and strive to take the game to the limits but refuse to cross the line.

These are the boys and girls we want to watch. In retrospect, the ideal pure athlete is Pete Rose. Play hard and hustle regardless of the talent possessed. At times, play a little dirty but give it your all. Is it an exhibition game? Give the fans what they want to see; an all out effort.

This attitude just doesn't appear by itself though. Give credit to the coaches and managers of these youth sports. This idea is installed at an early age. These coaches believe hard work, blood, sweat and tears is how you install the mentality of a champion. They also stress that these attributes bring the purest of pure feelings when you win a championship.

They play not to advance in the sport. They play for the integrity of the game. We should be proud that these people are in our youth's lives.

I know this isn't a typical local sports column but next time you see a coach on the campus of Warren or Downey, shake their hand and tell them thank you. Next time you're at one of the various little leagues or youth sport complexes, don't cringe, but indulge if you see a dirty play. There are much worse things.

The cleansing of professional athletics starts at the youth level, not the highest administrative rankings. You want to see sports clean again? The players need to believe that performance enhancing drugs are not needed to continue their pursuit of being the best.

What can I say? Competition is stiff these days. What a joke.



Volunteers with Breath of God Christian Fellowship Church and the ACTS Foundation, along with corporate donors, worked together to feed over 300 people at the 16th Annual Thanksgiving Outreach Dinner at the Barbara J. Riley Community & Senior Center on Nov. 16. Food baskets were also distributed at Downey high schools and middle schools. "I would like to thank the residents of Downey and the corporations that responded and offered their support to touch the lives of those less fortunate during this holiday season," said Pastor Garnett Simpson-Grier. Among the companies who donated were Pieloon, Coca-Cola, Norms, Olive Garden, Hometown Buffet, Boston Market, and more.

New Entertainment this week

CD Releases

My Chemical Romance - Live and Rare
Mya - Liberation
High School Musical 2: Non-stop Dance Party - Various Artists
John Lennon - Double Fantasy
 Source: Amazon.com

DVD Releases

MOVIES
 "The Brothers Solomon"
 "Rush Hour 3"
 "Eastern Promises"
 "The Kingdom"
 "The Heartbreak Kid"
TV/MISC.
 "WWE: The Best of Raw 15th Ann."
 Source: Amazon.com

Book Releases

"Truth and Consequences: Special Comments on the Bush Administration's War on American Values" by Keith Olbermann
 "The Writing Diet: Write Yourself Right-Size" by Julia Cameron
 "The Spectrum: A Scientifically Proven Program to Feel Better, Live Longer, Lose Weight, and Gain Health" by Dean Ornish
 Source: Casenet

Concerts

FRIDAY, DEC. 21
Brian Setzer Orchestra - Gibson Amphitheatre
Dave Koz - Cerritos Center
High School Musical - Kodak Th.
Lagwagon - Grove of Anaheim
SATURDAY
Brian Setzer Orchestra - Gibson Amphitheatre
Dave Koz - Cerritos Center
High School Musical - Kodak Th.
Shiny Toy Guns - Wiltern
Starship - Coach House
Bone Thugs - Grove of Anaheim
SUNDAY
High School Musical - Kodak Th.
WEDNESDAY
George Lopez - Nokia Theatre
THURSDAY
George Lopez - Nokia Theatre
KC & Jo-Jo - Grove of Anaheim
 Source: Casenet

Book Releases

"Princess Mia (Princess Diaries Series #9)" by Meg Cabot
 "Rules of the Game" by Neil Strauss
 "Shadow Music" by Julie Garwood
 "There's No Place Like Here" by Cecelia Ahern
 Source: barnesandnoble.com

Pay off library fines with canned food

DOWNEY - The Downey City Library will accept new canned and packaged staple goods as payment for overdue fines on returned library materials during the month of December. The food will then be donated to local needy families.

"There are many families in need at this time," a Downey Council PTA HELPS volunteer said. "We are so pleased by the generosity for those who donate each year."

Goods used in payment for fines will be accepted through Dec. 31 at the library's Circulation desk. The donated value of each item will be 50 cents. For more information, call (562) 904-7360, ext. 28.

Adult School offers pharmacy program

DOWNEY - The Downey Adult School Career and Education Center is now offering a pharmacy technician program.

During the course of the program, students will learn about the manufacturing and marketing of drugs, identification of drugs, various pharmacy practice settings, and the expectations of all members of the pharmacy team.

The program is from Jan. 7 to May 30 and costs \$575. Classes are held Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Orientation is on Jan. 5 from 9 to 11 a.m., where registration and \$200 deposit are due.

For information, call (562) 940-6200.

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 Stuffing - Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
 Cranberry Sauce - Freshly Baked Bread
 Yummy Pumpkin Pie
 Serves 6-8 guests \$69.95

Oven Roasted Turkey (20lbs)
 Stuffing - Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
 Cranberry Sauce - Freshly Baked Bread
 Yummy Pumpkin Pie
 Serves 10-12 guests \$84.95

Glazed Ham (Bone-In 10-12lbs)
 Fruit Sauce - Candied Yams
 Freshly Baked Bread
 Yummy Pumpkin Pie
 Serves 6-8 guests \$79.95

Prime Rib
 Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
 Green Beans - Freshly Baked Bread
 Yummy Pumpkin Pie
 \$11.95 per person (minimum 6)
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 At Woodruff, Downey
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Open For Breakfast 7AM JOIN US FOR AN EARLY DINNER ON CHRISTMAS Dec. 25 11:30 to 5PM

Roast Turkey	\$9.95
with stuffing, sweet potatoes and cranberry sauce	
Honey Baked Ham	\$9.95
and sweet potatoes	
Rib Eye Steak	\$11.95
Prime Rib 1/2 lb.	\$11.95
Sirloin Steak 1/2 lb.	\$9.95
T-Bone Steak 14 oz.	\$11.95
Steak & Shrimp	\$12.95
Roast Turkey & Ham Combo	\$11.95

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Seniors find companionship at Christmas

BY MARY FORNEY, THE DOWNEY PATRIOT

With hands clasped and staring straight ahead, Mary D'Mello Russell is unaware of the woman sitting beside her. Lost in her private world of dementia and Alzheimer's, daughter Maria Larkin of Downey speaks softly to her about past experiences and family members, patiently waiting for glimpses of recognition from Russell.

The once vibrant member of the Women's Army Corps during World War II is now 96 years old and resides at The Villa, an assisted living residential home on the corner of Downey Avenue and Imperial Highway.

Her daughter was among the family members and friends who filled The Villa on Dec. 15 to celebrate the holidays with their loved ones.

Seemingly unaffected by the voices of the guests and children running around her, it was the melody of Silent Night being played in the background by a visiting harpist which reached Russell as she began to hum and sing. With tears in her eyes, Larkin stroked her mother's hair, treasuring the fleeting moment of cognizance.

"Cherished memories like this are immeasurable because they last a lifetime," said David Kim, administrator of The Villa. "Our parents and grandparents paved our way in life so being here with them shows respect - we owe it to them."

Agnes Mary Holt, 77, doesn't have any family in California but she sat across the table from Russell anxiously awaiting the arrival of her friends from church. Holt never married so Shirley and James Anderson from Cerritos act as family to the former librarian and school teacher.

The Anderson's arrived in time to enjoy lunch with Holt and will take her to their home on Christmas Day if she wants to go.

"When someone doesn't have any family or are the last surviving member of their family, we try to bring them their friends," Kim said. "The staff also adopts them and acts as their family because we see them and care for them everyday - this is their home and I feel like I have many grandmothers and grandfathers here."

According to Kim, about 60 percent of the residents are left behind on Christmas Day so the staff members of The Villa and residents will gather together for their own gift exchange, sing Christmas carols, and have a special meal.

Kim said he is hoping for healthcare reform so more people can afford to live in quality retirement homes.

"It all comes down to loving and being loved. I have cried when residents have passed away but I know they lived a good quality of life while they were here," Kim said. "We get attached because we think of it as our family helping you take care of your family."

More than 8,100 assisted living facilities are currently listed on the California Registry and according to the "American Perceptions of Aging in the 21st Century," a 2002 publication released by the National Council on Aging and the AARP Andrus Foundation, 88 percent of men and women 65 and older said the number one key to a meaningful and vital life is family and friends.

"Everyone needs someone to visit them," Kim said. "All we can do is give them a safe, warm environment and even if they have dementia or Alzheimer's - they can sense we love them sincerely with all our hearts."



Tom Hutchinson, left, of Troop 2 and Gary Edmonds of Troop 441, both Downey residents, are recipients of the 2007 Award of Merit from the Frontier District of the L.A. Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Hutchinson attained the rank of First Class as a youth in the Boy Scout program, and has served local children as a Cubmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, a merit badge counselor, member of the Order of the Arrow and currently serves as the District Commissioner for the Frontier District. Edmonds received the Eagle Scout award as a youth in the Boy Scout program. He has helped two young men complete their Eagle projects, oversaw two Eagle Courts of Honors, is a merit badge counselor, an Order of the Arrow member, is Wood Badge trained, and has co-chaired two District Camporee outings.

'Charlie Wilson's War' filmed at Downey Studios

The movie, released today, was filming a scene when an explosion occurred at Downey Studios.

BY BROOKE KARLI, STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY - "A stiff drink. A little mascara. A lot of nerve. Who said they couldn't bring down the Soviet empire."

Such is the tagline for "Charlie Wilson's War," a Universal Studios drama starring Academy Award-winners Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts and Philip Seymour Hoffman, opening in theaters today.

The movie is based on George Crile's non-fiction book of the same name, a "true story of how a playboy congressman, a renegade CIA agent and a beautiful Houston socialite joined forces to lead the largest and most successful covert operation in history," according to the film's official website, www.charliewilsonswar.net.

The website goes on to say that "their efforts contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, with consequences that reverberate throughout the world today."

The movie is particularly recognized in Downey due to its filming at Downey Studios. In fact, while filming in January of this year, an explosion blew through the studios, inflicting severe injuries upon 34-year-old special effects assistant Chris Walkowiak. The injury followed a test-firing of an explosive device - a handheld mock-up of a stinger missile - which exploded incorrectly.

Crew members John Hartigan and Lynn Garrido were involved in the stunt, but were not injured.

According to the Downey Fire Department Fire Investigation Report, Hartigan pulled the special effects permit, which called for a different type of device to be used and required a safety officer to be present, neither of which were followed.

Downey Fire Captain Darren Moon said health and safety rules were breached by testing the device the day before the film's special effects team had a permit to do so.

Hartigan's pyrotechnic license was immediately confiscated and he was suspended for 30 days or until the investigation was completed. Good Time Charlie Productions also faced citations for breach of permit and fines from the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).

None of the film's cast was injured and filming resumed shortly after the explosion occurred.

"Charlie Wilson's War" is directed by Mike Nichols and is rated "R" for strong language, nudity/sexual content and some drug use.

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All American Home Center presented a check for \$3,214.71 to the Assistance League of Downey. Associates at All American raised money by hosting bake sales and contributions were matched by Lanny Gertler, the company's president, and his wife, Judy. Pictured are, left to right, Christina Gonzales; Mary Lou Schmidt, Assistance League of Downey president; Gertler; Belen Martinez; and David Naranjo.



Members of the Downey Dog Obedience Group delivered 72 cases of donated Milkbone dog biscuits to the Southeast Area Animal Control Authority (SEACA). Pictured are, left to right, Gina Grissom, Vickie Hernandez of SEACA, Margie Grissom, Phyllis Bruckler and Valerie Leonard. The group is also collecting dog and cat toys to donate to SEACA for Christmas.



The Toastmasters International Club 587 recently elected new officers, including Ralph Diaz, president; Beatrice Robles, vice president, education; John McAllister, DDS, vice president, membership; Fionnuala Anderson and Samira Menendez, vice president, publicity; Nuria Rivas, secretary; Rene Estrada, treasurer; and Moshel Chanan, sergeant at arms. Pictured above are some of the officers. Toastmasters International meets every Tuesday at 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Downey. For information, call (562) 928-2658.



Brody Jackson Goble was born on Dec. 11 to Chris and Alissa Goble of Washougal, Wash. He weighed in at seven pounds, seven ounces, and was 20.5 inches long. Chris is a 2000 graduate of Downey High School. Brody's grandparents are Rosemary Padgett of Washougal; Doug Bach of Bartown, Fla.; and Jim and Dolores Goble of Downey. Dolores has served as the principal of Rio Hondo Elementary School for the past decade.

Open enrollment period deadline looms ahead

The right Medicare plan lets you get on with your plans. You want to enjoy your life. So the last thing you want to do is to spend your days thinking about your Medicare plan. That's why you should do a quick review of your current plan's cost, coverage and customer service for 208 and decide if you need to make any changes for the next year. Medicare's open enrollment ends Dec. 31. It is important to make any changes to your Medicare coverage now.

Take a few minutes to review your coverage and any changes to it for 2008. Here's how:

1. Gather information about your prescriptions and providers. Review and keep information sent to you by Medicare, Social Security or your current plan that talks about changes to your coverage for next year.
2. Compare plans in your area. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Cost: Will your premium and other costs change in 2008? Are there plans that will cost you less?
 - Coverage: Are your doctors, hospital and pharmacy part of your plan in 2008? Will the prescription drugs you take be covered by your plan?
 - Customer Service: Are you satisfied with your plan's service?
3. Decide which plan is right for you for 2008. People who get extra help paying for their prescription drug costs should also review and compare plans each fall. You can enroll in a different plan or add prescription drug coverage through Dec. 31. However, if you are satisfied with your current plan's cost and coverage for next year and the customer service you receive, you don't need to do anything.

Check for Medicare events in your community by visiting www.medicare.gov, or call (800) MEDICARE.

Bipartisan bill expands Head Start program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34) praised a recent signing into law of the bipartisan *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act*, citing the important accomplishment as a victory of the new Democratic Congress.

Passed by Congress on Nov. 14 by wide margins in both chambers, the *Improving head Start for School Readiness Act* (HR 1429) reauthorizes, expands and improves the program through fiscal year 2010. The successful Head Start early education program provides vital child development, health, and nutrition services to low-income children, from birth to age five, and their families.

"For 40 years, the Head Start program has helped more than 20 million children in our country enter kindergarten better prepared," Roybal-Allard said. "The *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act* will expand this effective program to serve as many as 10,000 additional low-income children. The measure will also strengthen teacher quality, professional development, classroom practices and the overall monitoring of programs to ensure their quality and accountability.

"The Head Start program is especially important in the Latino community," Roybal-Allard added. "Of the 900,000 children currently served by the program, 324,000 are Hispanic children. I'm pleased this final measure addresses specific needs of the Latino community, including outreach services to Limited English Proficient children and their families."

The bill also prioritizes Indian, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start funding to address the disparity in current services.

This critical law contains provisions to:

- Improve teacher and classroom quality, including improving teacher qualifications and increasing teacher salaries.

- Strengthen the focus on school readiness, including requiring the Head Start program to use the latest and best science regarding early childhood brain development in its curriculum and materials.

- Provide access to Head Start for more children, with higher authorization levels for Head Start and a priority on the expansion of Early Head Start, which serves children from birth to age three.

- Impose strong accountability measures, to better ensure that Head Start funds are used appropriately and efficiently and that underperforming programs are either replaced or quickly improved.

Research finds that children who attend Head Start enter school better prepared than low-income children who do not attend the program. The congressionally-mandated Impact Study found that after less than one school year, Head Start narrowed the achievement gap by 45 percent in pre-reading and by 28 percent in pre-writing. There is also research showing that Head Start students experience IQ gains and are less likely to need special education, repeat a grade, or commit crimes in adolescence. They are also more likely to graduate from high school.

'Phantom of the Opera' coming next year

COSTA MESA – Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" will return to Segerstrom Hall at the Orange County Performing Artscenter for a four-week engagement next year from March 26 through April 19.

The show will be produced by the Cameron Mackintosh/Really Useful Theatre Company. Ticket prices are \$21.25 to \$73.25 and are available by calling (714) 556-2787 or online at www.ocpac.org.

Recalled toys reason to be extra careful

BY CONGRESSWOMAN LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD (CA-34) AND STEVE BLACKLEDGE, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, CALPIRG

In the midst of alarming toy recalls this year, parents would be wise to ask the following questions this holiday shopping season: Is this toy tainted with lead or other dangerous chemicals? Does it pose any other hazard? How can I be sure this toy is safe for my child?

While there may not be quick or easy answers to these important questions, members of Congress, consumer advocacy groups and parents must take concerted steps to better protect our children.

For starters, parents need to stay informed. Shoppers should check out the newly released "2007 Trouble in Toyland" report compiled by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG). This informative report offers important safety guidelines for purchasing toys for small children and provides examples of toys currently on store shelves that pose potential safety hazards. To view the full report, visit the USPIRG Web site at www.calpirg.org.

So why do parents need to take it upon themselves to learn about toy safety? Because the Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) – the government agency responsible for monitoring consumer goods in the United States – does not test consumer products before they are offered for sale. From chainsaws to Barbie dolls, it is the manufacturers, importers and retailers who are responsible for guaranteeing that the products they sell meet all mandatory and voluntary safety standards.

It is time for Congress to address these glaring deficiencies in the safety review process.

First, Congress needs to effectively ban lead in any jewelry, toy or other product intended for children under 12. Exposure to lead, even in tiny amounts, may lower a child's IQ and cause other developmental or behavioral problems.

Second, we need mandatory testing of children's products by independent third-party laboratories to guarantee import safety. Imported products should also be subject to greater traceability and labeling requirements.

Third, the CPSC needs more authority to issue greater civil penalties for violations – an increase from the current maximum of \$1.8 million to at least \$100 million. The penalties must be an actual deterrent, not just the cost of doing business.

Finally, Congress must arm the CPSC with an adequate budget to responsibly carry out its job. While imports have quadrupled since the agency was founded in 1974, its budget, when adjusted for inflation, is less than half today of what it was then. As a result, staffing cutbacks have taken a toll. Only an estimated 15 of the agency's approximate 420 staff members (down from a total of 978 in 1980) are on duty as import inspectors at hundreds of ports of entry. Clearly, more needs to be done to police the product safety marketplace. In addition to restoring the agency's budget to help guard against harmful toys getting into the hands of children. We need an army nationwide of consumer cops on the beat, not just the CPSC.

This holiday season, as Congress works under a new Democratic leadership to make toy safety a priority, shoppers, lawmakers and manufacturers alike must be vigilant against possible toy hazards. Working together, we can and must do more to prevent dangerous toys from reaching our children.

Downey Little League taking sign-ups

DOWNEY – The West Downey Little League is now taking sign-ups for its 2008 season.

Registration will be held Jan. 8, 10, 15 and 17 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the West Middle School cafeteria; and Jan. 12 and 19 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the West Downey Little League field.

The league is also accepting free sign-ups for a new Challenger Division for children ages 5 to 18 with physical and/or mental disabilities. For information, call (562) 928-2837.

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Making sense of the mortgage meltdown

CONTRIBUTED BY BILL HIGGINS, ING DIRECT

There will likely be more than one million foreclosures this year. In many places, home prices have dropped significantly. Speculation fever has been replaced with talk of a crisis. Even President Bush has stepped in with a plan to help some troubled homeowners.

In a way, though, this is a much-needed correction.

We learn to swim by paddling around the wading pool – not by diving into the deep end. Today's situation isn't much different: People caught in the "deep end" – with loans they can't afford and homes in peril of foreclosure – are often those who jumped into homeownership before learning how to stay afloat financially.

Here's how it happened. In the mid-1990's, the housing market grew dramatically. The creation of a secondary market for sub-prime loans made credit available to those who were historically underserved. At the same time, a roaring stock market gave people the assets to purchase more expensive homes.

When the dot-com bubble burst, investors sought refuge from volatile stocks by pumping money into real estate. In short, the booming stock market that launched the housing bubble inflated it even more when stocks plummeted. Also during that time, to stem a crisis of consumer confidence, the Federal Reserve began a series of interest rate cuts that cheapened credit.

Within a few years, the homeownership rate hit an all-time high. Constant for more than 20 years around 64 percent, homeownership soared from 1995 to 2006 – hitting nearly 70 percent.

This rise was mostly due to people who dove into the deep end. Before the mass-merchandizing of sub-prime lending, and seemingly cheap credit, many of these buyers would never have qualified for a conventional mortgage.

Some took out oversized loans without understanding how much debt they were assuming and how much their interest rates and payments could change. Others dove in with full knowledge – gambling on a superheated market to boost their home's value, so that they'd be able to handle high-priced loans by refinancing later at lower rates. Others hoped to make money by "flipping" their properties.

For a few years, it seemed to work. In much of the country, prices steadily increased. Homes – traditionally viewed as places to live and long-term financial commitments – became short-term investments.

Buyers who were already deep in mortgage debt got in even deeper by using their homes as ATMs, cashing out the equity created by the real-estate appreciation.

But many of these borrowers weren't in a position to keep up with their loans if the housing market cooled. When it did, they faced the prospect of owing more than their homes' retail value, or of coping with a mortgage that would soon reset to a much higher monthly payment.

Many people who got in over their heads are hurting. So are the companies holding the securities backed by these loans – for the same reasons.

To prevent a similar crisis from happening again, some common sense is needed. To begin, we must accept that not everyone is ready for homeownership.

In the past, young people entering the work force typically rented for a while to establish good credit and save a down payment. Mortgages were harder to get, but they were solid.

Lenders who offered zero-down home loans and low-cost, introductory rates to "cram" buyers into homes that they couldn't otherwise afford were irresponsible. But so were the borrowers who cast caution to the wind and either overpaid for a house, or bought into a house or locale beyond their means.

Further, lenders should hold and manage the loans they create. When lenders sell off the loans they write to investors, they have every incentive to "move as much paper" as possible – as long as they're not the ones holding worthless paper at the end of the day.

Put another way, the "mortgage meltdown" should teach both borrowers and lenders to behave more rationally.

Bill Higgins is the head of lending services for ING Direct.



The Downey Association of Realtors recently raised over \$4,100 and donated it to organizations in Downey. Pictured are, left to right, Ana Esparza, DAOR president; Larry Lewis, Downey in the School program; Stacey Brabrant, PTA HELPS; Claudia Garcia, TLC; Myra Davola, ARC; Ernest Coldwell, GOOD; Nancy Messineo, Downey City Library; and Edwin Huber, Realtor Community Relations Committee.

Conserving energy does not have to be a drain

BY DAVID LILLARD

Each year as the calendar moves toward the New Year, I find myself thinking about Dick Cheney. The vice president once called energy conservation a "matter of personal virtue" not part of a national energy plan. It was a backhanded compliment, likening people who practiced conservation to some quaint religious sect -- pious but outside the American mainstream.

But just a few years later, public opinion polls show that Americans view energy conservation as patriotic. It's something we do to preserve our way of life, not lose it.

Mr. Cheney is right, though. Conservation is virtuous. It's what my parents, who grew up during the Great Depression, call being thrifty. They raised seven kids on a pipe coverer's wages and sent them all to college through their thrifty approach to managing cash – an envelope for groceries, one for bread and milk, another for incidentals, another for things we kids needed. We lived pretty well for a working class family, and my parents retired young, all thanks to thrift.

Energy conservation needs the same kind of thrift. You save to enhance your life, not yuk it up. In reality, a lot of energy produced in the United States is not used at all – it's wasted like produce forgotten in the fridge. Here are a few examples from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Your television uses more electricity during the hours it's turned off than the time when it's turned on. If you watch TV four hours each night, your set actually draws slightly more energy during the other 20 hours each day because modern TVs idle in standby mode. That way the picture lights up instantaneously when you turn it on, rather than taking a couple of seconds to warm up. This slow draw on your power is called vampire energy. If you can live with a two-second warm-up, you can save a lot of energy and not miss a single show. Those little clocks on microwaves and VCRs are another example – they suck energy without adding to your quality of life.

An outlet with an on-off switch or a power strip is all you need to eliminate phantom energy drain – even if you just turn all this stuff off at bedtime, you'll save a lot.

Your washing machine uses 90 percent of its energy to make hot water. Says the DOE: Unless you're dealing with oily stains, the warm or cold water setting on your machine will generally do a good job of cleaning your clothes. Switching your temperature setting from hot to warm can cut a load's energy use in half. Energy saved; way of life intact.

About 20 percent of your house's electricity goes to indoor lighting. Just using more efficient bulbs can save 50 to 75 percent on energy usage. Same amount of light – no cramp on your way of life.

For outdoor lighting, common sense saves even more energy. That's because most outdoor lighting does a better job of lighting up the sky than the ground or sidewalk. And the big myth about outdoor lighting is that it deters crime. Evidence, some of it from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), suggests otherwise. The DOJ found no statistical correlation between street lighting and crime. In San Antonio law enforcement officials have found that darkening the area around public schools had the direct effect of lowering the vandalism rate. Since they reduced the level of lighting on schools, the annual cost of repairs due to vandalism went down from \$160,000 to \$41,000.

Why the difference between conventional wisdom and reality? Without getting too technical, it boils down to two things. First, the human eye can differentiate only so much contrast between darkness and bright light. When night lighting is too bright, as it usually is in shopping centers and car dealerships, the eye is literally blinded by light. And because a brightly lighted parking area usually lies between "protected" stores and, say, a police cruiser on rounds out on the road, it can be impossible for police to see criminals standing right in front of a shop.

Full cut-off lighting fixtures point the light on the subject, not up in the sky. Using the right fixtures cuts crime and save energy – and they cost less to operate but cost the same to buy as other lights. In short, saving energy preserves our way of life.

This list of examples goes on and on. So as we ponder a new year, ponder this: Personal virtue, national energy policy, and old-fashioned American thrift go hand in hand.

David Lillard is a journalist and co-editor of Blue Ridge Press.

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