



The Downey Patriot



Miss Downey is crowned
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Non-profits want theater discount
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Thursday, May 2, 2013

Vol. 12 No. 3

8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240

Street Faire is Saturday

DOWNEY – Thousands are expected to attend the Downey Street Faire taking place this Saturday, May 4, near Downey High School.

More than 200 crafters, businesses and organizations are slated to take part in the community event, now in its 20th year and sponsored by the Downey Chamber of Commerce.

The event will be held along Brookshire Avenue, between Firestone Boulevard and 5th Street. In addition to hundreds of vendors, there will also be a centrally-located food court, live entertainment, a kid's zone with giant inflatable slides, and a car show featuring more than 200 classic vehicles.

Admission to the Street Faire is free. The fair is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For questions, call the chamber at (562) 923-2191.

NBC-4 morning show filming in Downey

DOWNEY – The NBC-4 "Today in L.A." morning show will be taping live segments from 3rd Street Coffee in Downey on Friday, May 10, and the community is invited to take part.

Residents will receive free coffee, tea and small lattes, courtesy of "Today in L.A."

Taping begins at 5 a.m.

City officials are dubbing the event "A Day in Downey" and will use the taping to highlight "some of the unique things that make Downey such a great place to live, work and play," said Councilman Roger Brossmer.

Plans are still in their preliminary stages, but possibilities include Downey's police and fire departments, Downey schools, Gangs Out of Downey, the TLC Family Resource Center, the "Healthy Downey" initiative, Downey's Green Task Force, and more.

Residents are invited to show up any time between 5-7 a.m.

"Today in L.A." is anchored by Alycia Lane and Michael Brownlee, with Elita Loresca doing weather and Sean Murphy on traffic.

It won't be the morning show's first time in Downey. It taped live segments from the Columbia Memorial Space Center last year.

3rd Street Coffee is at 8221 3rd St. in Downtown Downey.

For more details, call Mary Cho at (562) 746-6173.

Downey Cemetery to mark Memorial Day

DOWNEY – Memorial Day will be celebrated at the Downey Cemetery with a public ceremony May 27 that starts at 11 a.m.

There will be a wreath laying, a rifle salute by American Legion Post 270 and the playing of "Taps."

Cemetery district trustees will also give remarks.

The ceremony is expected to last about one hour. Visitors should park at the Green Line parking lot on Lakewood Boulevard and take a free shuttle to the cemetery.

For more details, call Lorena Arellano at (562) 904-7223.



Christopher Picos is training six days a week in advance of his May 18 professional debut.

Photos by Martin Trejo

READY TO RUMBLE

• Amateur boxer and Downey resident Christopher Picos will realize his dream when he turns pro May 18.

By Eric Pierce
Editor

DOWNEY – Christopher Picos smiles coyly at the memory of his favorite knockout of his young career.

He was 16, preparing for a fight at the Marriott Hotel in Norwalk (now the DoubleTree). His trainer was lacing up Picos' gloves when his opponent, a cocky guy from Arizona whose name is not important, strolled into the makeshift locker room.

"Which one of you is Christopher Picos?" the guy bellowed. Picos stood up.

"You're Chris Picos? I'm going to knock you out," the guy yapped. "I'm going to mess you up."

Preferring to let his gloves do the talking, Picos didn't say anything back.

He knocked the guy out in 47 seconds.

"It was a beautiful day," Picos laughed.

After compiling an amateur record of 86-6, the 20-year-old Picos will make his professional debut May 18 at the Hollywood Park Casino. One week later he travels to Durango, Mexico for another fight.

His debut bout is contracted at 154 pounds, though Picos plans to eventually compete as a welterweight at 147.

Turning pro is a dream come true for Picos, who slipped on his first pair of boxing gloves at age 10. He honed his skills with other young boxers at the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex.

By age 12 Picos knew boxing is what he wanted to do.

"You have to be a little crazy to want to box," he admitted. "But I loved it right away. I love the competitiveness. I like that it's one-on-one, I only have to rely on myself"

He excelled as an amateur, bring-



ing home trophies from the national Silver Gloves and Golden Gloves competitions.

His success landed him on the cover of "Norwalk Now," the city-published newsletter mailed to Norwalk residents. It may not sound like much, but that little bit of publicity led to him being recognized in the checkout line at Stater Bros., a thrilling moment for a young teen. It motivated him to work even harder.

Norwalk holds a special place in Picos' heart because it is where he spent his formative years, having attended D.D. Johnston Elementary, Corvallis Middle School and Norwalk High.

A few years ago he made the move to Downey, a city he is proud to call home. In fact, he will be fighting out of Downey when introduced at his fights.

Training out of the Ponce De Leon Gym in Montebello, Picos' fighting style is both graceful and ag-

gressive. During a sparring session Monday, Picos weaved his head back and forth before rushing forward with a flurry of hooks to the body.

"He's a good fighter. He has a good future as long as he works hard and doesn't get lazy," said Javier Capetillo, who trains Picos.

Capetillo has had a great deal of success as a trainer, most notably with former welterweight champion Antonio Margarito. But he was nearly banished from the sport after the California State Athletic Commission suspended Capetillo 12 months for illegally loading Margarito's hand-wraps before his 2009 fight with Shane Mosely.

Controversy aside, Picos understands he is responsible for his own success. His training regiment includes waking up at 5:30 a.m. for daily long-distance runs. Then several hours at the boxing gym before returning home for lunch and rest. He finishes the night putting in cardio

work at the L.A. Fitness at Downey Landing.

His family members are his biggest supporters, most notably his fiancé, Veronica, and their 3-year-old daughter.

"It takes a lot of dedication, watching my weight and training every day," Picos said. "But it makes it easier that I love what I do. I pray to God I can continue doing this."

As far as his debut fight next week, Picos knows very little about his opponent, other than he's from Tijuana. Still, he says, "I'm going for a knockout."

He's also excited about his fight in Durango, Mexico, where he expects to be heavily booed. And that's OK.

"It makes me hungry," Picos smiles. "They may not know me, but they're going to learn to love me."

For ticket information, go online to playhpc.com or call (562) 879-6151.

Civic leader Mary Lou Schmidt dies

• Community leader passed away April 24 at age 76; friends, family share memories.

By Greg Waskul
Contributor

DOWNEY – Mary Lou Schmidt, a longtime Downey community icon and leader, passed away on April 24, at the age of 76.

Here in her own words and those of her family and some close friends, is the story of a life spent in service to her family, her city, the Assistance League of Downey and the two hospitals she loved.

"I was born Mary Lou Farmer at Suburban Hospital in South Gate on October 1, 1936, the only child born to Travis Timothy (Dutch) Farmer and Olyne Grace Farmer," she said. Her birth date will come as a surprise to many of Mary Lou's friends, because she never disclosed her actual age to any of them. Most thought she was at least five years younger than she really was...and of course, Mary Lou did nothing to discourage this notion.

She weighed just three pounds at birth. "She was so tiny she could fit in the palm of her father's hand," said Mary Lou's husband Don. "In those days, it was rare for a baby to survive at that size, but then Mary Lou was a rare individual in everything she ever did."

When she spoke of her childhood, she had indelible memories of a very different Southern California than exists today. "I remember when there were no freeways and no subdivision housing," she said. "The area was covered with orange groves, walnut orchards and avocado trees, with eucalyptus trees acting as windbreaks."

"I remember when a cup of coffee and a candy bar were each 5 cents, hamburgers were 10 cents, and a gallon of gas was 18 cents," Mary Lou said. "Postage was 3 cents for surface and 7 cents for air mail."

"I remember when doctors made house calls and one could rent a three-bedroom home for \$25 per month," she said. "A matinee movie was 10 cents for a double feature, plus a cartoon and two serial features. Oh, and the newsreel, too!"

"I remember waiting in line at a children's store during World War II to be able to purchase a small metal car for 25 cents," she said. "Gas was rationed, the lines were long, and you needed a ration stamp to purchase gas. Everyone was allowed just so many shoes, and shoestrings were scarce. There were no fireworks on the Fourth of July, as all the manufacturers were making ammunition for the war effort."

After attending elementary and middle school in South Gate and Lynwood, she graduated from South Gate High School, where she was an outstanding student and was involved in many extra-curricular activities. During her senior year she was chosen the top student in both the Art and Physical Education Departments. She was also Year Book Editor and a member of the Ramblerettes.

She attended Pepperdine University, where she was involved in many campus activities. "I was a reporter on the Wave, our college newspaper,

See SCHMIDT, page 8



Miss Downey, Miss Teen Downey, Jr. Miss Downey and Little Miss Downey, along with their courts, will represent Downey and the Downey Rose Float Association at community events during the coming year.

Miss Downey is crowned

DOWNEY – Jessica Aguirre was crowned Miss Downey, and Allie Beltran Miss Teen Downey, during the Miss Downey Pageant held March 30 at the Downey Theatre.

Some 65 young women completed for the titles.

Aguirre's court includes prin-

cesses Parisa Geshti, Taly Argueta, Ada Hernandez and Jessica Mendez.

Miss Teen Downey princesses include Miranda White, Emily Gamboa and Lauren Martinez.

Also crowned that night was Jr. Miss Downey Marisa Padilla and princesses Katelyn Hernandez,

Emma Manetta and Michelle Villarino.

Little Miss Downey went to Lindsey Moorman. Princesses include Gloria Falach and Azyln Castro.

The young women will serve as ambassadors for the Downey Rose Float Association and the city of Downey for the next year.

Local organizations and businesses that would like to have the courts attend their events should contact their chaperone, Mercy White, at drfacourtsinfo@gmail.com.



Author Reyna Grande will speak and sign books at the Downey City Library on May 20.

Author to share immigrant experience at library

DOWNEY – Award-winning author Reyna Grande will speak and sign books at the Downey City Library on Monday, May 20, from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Grande's memoir, "The Distance Between Us," tells of her struggle to overcome poverty and her journey to the United States at age 9 to live with the father she hadn't seen for eight years.

An undocumented child immigrant, Grande later become the first

person in her family to graduate from college, receiving a B.A. and M.F.A. degree in creative writing.

Her autobiography was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. The Los Angeles Times called her book, "brutally honest... the Angela's Ashes of the modern Mexican immigrant experience."

Grande is also the author of two novels, "Across a Hundred Mountains" and "Dancing with Butterflies," which received an International Latino Book Award.

Copies of her book will be available for purchase and signing at the free event. For reservations, call (562) 904-7360, ext. 132.

Warren High named a distinguished school

DOWNEY – In recognition of its exemplary programs, Warren High School will be recognized as a California Distinguished School at a regional ceremony May 13.

The California Distinguished School program evaluates individual schools' progress and successes in addressing the needs of all students closing the "Achievement Gap."

Each year, all students in the state participate in Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR testing). The results and analysis of these assessments, together with other rigorous criteria, determine the eligibility for schools to be invited to be considered for the Distinguished School honor.

In addition to the Distinguished School honor, Warren High received "Exemplary Program" recognition in the area of Career Technical Education.

In addition, Warren is waiting for official notification of two more "Exemplary Program" awards. The additional awards are for "Arts Education" and "Physical Activity and Nutrition."

With these additional awards, Warren High will become the only school in California to be recognized as a California Distinguished School and receive exemplary program awards in all categories.

Song, dance show Friday night

DOWNEY – The Exchange Club Family Support Center, a child abuse prevention agency, will present a family-friendly song and dance show titled "Miracles of Music & Hope" tonight, May 3, at the Barbara J. Riley Community and Senior Center.

The show begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$5 per person (children under 5 free) and can be purchased at the door. Proceeds will be used to help prevent child abuse in our community.

For ticket information or questions, call the center at (562) 904-9590.

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Non-profits clash with city over theater rental rates

• Community non-profits chide council subcommittee over rising theatre rental rates.

By Christian Brown
Staff Writer

DOWNEY – With rental rates expected to increase this year at the Downey Theatre for select non-profit arts groups, members of the arts community openly chided city officials last Wednesday for fiscally stifling local arts organizations, both old and new.

During a nearly 90-minute meeting of the theatre city council subcommittee, arts supporters earnestly petitioned Councilmen Roger Brossmer and Alex Saab to reconsider adopting a flat rental rate for all theatre tenants.

“I’ll speak for the Downey Symphony,” said longtime Downey resident Harold Tseklenis as he stood to his feet.

“The Downey Symphony was once an extension of the parks and recreation department, which didn’t have the means to provide these services...to face the burden of rent doesn’t make sense when the city is trying to support a resurgence of cultural programming,” he said. “Please consider reverting the prices.”

Carol Kearns of the Downey Symphony and Downey Arts Coalition also protested the new theatre rental rates, asking city officials to rescind the unnecessary financial pressure off local non-profits.

“This is just a small fraction of your budget, but it’s a major part of our budget. Give a little break to the legacy groups – you want to keep these people,” she said.

While current tenants pay \$720 for six hours Monday through Wednesday and \$900 for six hours Thursday through Sunday, the Downey Symphony and Downey Civic Light Opera have continued to pay rental rates from the 2011-12 fiscal year, saving each organization thousands of dollars.

“I don’t think you should



Photo by Martin Trejo

Carol Kearns, a Downey Symphony board member, speaks at a Downey Theater subcommittee meeting last week.

limit it for just those two groups,” Kearns said. “This is not something you can nickel and dime. I’m arguing on behalf of every group who is contributing to the arts in Downey.”

City officials, however, warned the Downey Symphony and Downey Civic Light Opera that a flat rate would be issued in July for all non-profit organizations and commercial businesses wishing to use the theatre.

While Brossmer reiterated his support for local arts and culture, he maintained that additional subsidies for non-profit groups only add to the \$11 million deficit the city council worked to mitigate last year.

“At the end of the day, it’s about dollars,” said Brossmer. “There’s an expense to run the theatre. We’re not going to break even, but as a city council we’re willing to subsidize that amount for the value art programs bring to the community.”

Although the theatre continues to cost the city more than \$400,000 every year, Brossmer believes VenueTech, the private theater group

contracted in 2010 to manage the Downey Theatre, has increased the efficiency and utilization of the 738-seat theatre.

“We knew there would be fine-tuning along the way,” said Brossmer. “This isn’t a process without issues...but I’m impressed with the acts they’ve brought in so far.”

Downey Arts Coalition member Lana Wahlquist, however, reminded Brossmer and Saab not to forget about future groups that could want to use the theatre.

“Local non-profits add value to our lives and the community,” said Wahlquist. “They’re not going to be able to compete with the acts VenueTech is bringing in. We’ve got to make sure the non-profits don’t get lost in the shuffle.”

Saab assured residents in attendance that the city council hopes to find a resolution that is both beneficial to local non-profits while taking into consideration the city’s limited resources.

“This is value you can’t quantify,” he said. “I don’t want you to come

away with we’re not sharing the same sentiment. The purpose of the theatre is not to make money. We’re trying to compromise, for lack of a better word.”

Both Brossmer and Saab seemed open to providing city grants to “legacy” community groups in the future on a need basis, if city economics improve.

“We agree with the vast majority of what you’re saying,” said Saab. “We’re up here to come up with solutions. We don’t have all the answers.”

Recent Downey transplant Don Marshall is selfishly hopeful the city will grant local non-profits discounted theatre rates in order to ensure a future for what he called “the Downey art renaissance.”

“I moved here and I didn’t expect Downey to be the center of this art renaissance,” said Marshall. “Nobody’s suggesting things should be free, but it’s reasonable to cost less to nurture and foster local arts and new organizations. When rent is too high, it strangles them in the cradle.”

CRIME REPORT

Thursday, April 18

At 9:00 p.m., a fatal traffic collision occurred on Imperial at Ardis when a motorcyclist lost control of his motorcycle and crashed. The male driver was pronounced deceased at the scene. The accident is being investigated.

At 11:00 p.m., officers observed a man breaking into United Rentals located at 9609 Firestone. The man took approximately 75 pounds of copper wiring from the location. The male was arrested a short time later as he was attempting to leave with the loss. The suspect was booked for theft.

Saturday, April 20

At 11:30 a.m., a burglar attempted to break into a home in the 8200 block of Boyson, but was interrupted by the homeowner. The suspect ran from the scene and eluded capture, but a detective recognized the description of the suspect and a notice was sent out to surrounding law enforcement agencies. The suspect was eventually arrested by California State Parole Officers on Monday, April 22. The suspect was booked for Residential Burglary.

At 4:45 p.m., a shallow grave with a body was found on the embankment of the 105 freeway west of Lakewood Boulevard. Detectives conducted a homicide investigation with the assistance of the Los Angeles County Coroner. Through investigative means Downey Police Detectives were able to identify and arrest suspect Bryan Petty, 22 years old, transient who stayed in the area of the freeway. The suspect was booked into Los Angeles County Jail.

Wednesday, April 24

At 1 p.m., a burglary occurred in the 7900 block of Dalen. A witness reported seeing two males go into the rear yard of a residence. Officers arrived and contacted a male who ran out of the house. The male was arrested down the street after a short foot chase. A second suspect was located inside the residence hiding under a bed. Both suspects were arrested and booked for burglary.

Saturday, April 27

At 4 p.m., officers responded to Independence Park regarding a male suspect who was harassing several female subjects inside of the park. When a coach asked the suspect to leave, the subject produced a pocket knife and threatened the coach with it. Officers located the suspect a short distance away from the park. He was arrested for threatening to stab the coach.

Sunday, April 28

At 11:45 p.m., officers responded to a family fight inside of an apartment in the 11900 block of Lakewood Blvd. The two adult residents, who are also brothers, were engaged in an argument when one of the brothers armed himself with a kitchen knife and tried to stab the victim. The victim was able to avoid being stabbed, and officers took the suspect into custody for assault with a deadly weapon.

Information provided by Downey Police Department.

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ASPIRE students bring home awards

DOWNEY – The city of Downey’s ASPIRE after-school program participated in the fifth annual Teen Adventure Challenge held April 20 at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas.

It was the third consecutive year in which ASPIRE brought home first place in the middle school bracket.

The after-school program sent representatives from Griffiths, Sussman and West middle schools. In all, seven ASPIRE teams participated in the outdoor event.

The first place team from ASPIRE’s Griffiths team included Victoria Vilasenor, Ryan Cachu, Isabella Simoni and Xavier Valencia, along with staff member George Thomas.

Other awards ASPIRE received included the Spirit Award, which goes to the team that showed the most positive encouragement throughout the event, and the Overall Performance Award, for showing teamwork, positive character and athletic ability.

The event included a series of team building activities, brain teasers, mountain biking, kayaking and rock-climbing.

Its purpose was to promote an active, healthy lifestyle while exposing students to local parks.

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Downey KIWIN’S win club of the year

DOWNEY – Downey High School’s KIWIN’S Club attended the California-Nevada-Hawaii KIWIN’S district convention in San Diego held April 19-21, held every year in celebration of the accomplishments of KIWIN’S, a youth service club sponsored by Kiwanis.

Hundreds of students listened to speakers discuss leadership skills, while also attending meetings and voting on new district officers for next year.

The Downey KIWIN’S Club was honored as Distinguished Club of the Year for 2012-13. It also received first place awards for its Governor’s District Project; first place for best T-shirt design; second place for club promotion video; and fundraiser of the year for its work in pediatric trauma prevention.

In addition, club advisor Alex Gaytan was inducted into the KIWIN’S Hall of Fame and recognized as advisor of the year.

“We were honored to represent Downey High KIWIN’S and take so many awards home,” said Karina Gonzalez, treasurer for Downey KIWIN’S. “We can’t wait to get home and get to work on the new year serving the community of Downey.”

Downey High students who attended the convention included club president Anthony De Leon, Joshua Ruiz, Robert Perez, Karina Gonzalez, Andrea Martinez and Jessica Samaniego.

They were accompanied by their advisor, Alex Gaytan.

Busy month looms for downtown’s Stay Gallery

• Stay Gallery lines up exhibits, collaborations for entire month of May.

DOWNEY – On Thursday night, Stay Gallery hosted the USC Alumni Club of The San Gabriel Valley as they held a fundraiser to give scholarships to students currently attending USC.

Legendary football coach John Robinson and former USC All-American and New England Patriot Hall of Famer Sam ‘Bam’ Cunningham were among a group of 100 in attendance.

“This is a part of a bigger initiative where we want to create a strong partnership with reputable local institutions that we believe will further our mission of bringing people together through art and culture,” said Valentin Flores, executive director of Stay Gallery and Downey Art Vibe.

On Friday, May 3, Stay Gallery will open its doors to the public to showcase their latest collaboration with Downey Museum of Art (DMOA).

“We have named the exhibit ‘A View from Our Past’ to highlight what we consider is an incredible collaboration that lives here in our city,” said Stay Gallery creative director Gabriel Enamorado.

While the event is free, donations are encouraged. All donations will go to DMOA as they seek to program their collection.

“I think this exhibit represents a link to the past, but at the same time will hopefully be a launching point for future events in the community,” said George Redfox, a museum board member. “I think the arts are alive and well in Downey and I am confident the DMOA will be part of this movement.”



“Thanks to Stay Gallery for hosting our show.”

The exhibit will be showing at Stay Gallery until Wednesday, May 8.

This Tuesday, Stay Gallery will be issuing a progress report to the City Council where they will offer details on the gallery’s development.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.

“Lots of people want to know what we have done over the last six months since our grand opening, this is your chance to hear all about our progress and where we are planning on going during this next year,” said Joseph Manacmul, operations manager at the gallery.

Stay Gallery will be trying several new concepts in May. On May 10, they will be hosting their first ‘pop-up shop’ concept with a local clothing company, Heavysset.

This is part of a bigger initiative in which the gallery hopes to attract local designers, innovators, and creators to use the gallery space as their boutique shop to bring to market creative concepts.

“We are way more than just photographs and paintings, we want our space to be used for all creative and innovative concepts. We are even working on hosting a show with robots in the near future,” said Flores, the executive director.

Heavysset is a collective of friends, artists and thinkers. Their products are inspired “by our city and the people around us.”

On May 17, female artist Jessie Nelson (also known as “Changes”) will be featured in Stay Gallery’s monthly exhibit, dubbed “Gold, Guns & Girls.” Her work highlights honest feminine emotion and is inspired by street art and her surroundings.

“Women have stories to tell and they need to be heard,” said Nelson. “Painting and creating art is more about a connection and helping people out than anything else.”

The exhibit will be up through May 29.

On May 28, Stay Gallery will deliver their first pilot program titled “Downey Doodle-icious,” a partnership between the gallery, local artist Don Lamkin, Gallatin Elementary, the city of Downey and local businesses to help a third grade class “experience Downtown Downey.”

Students will enjoy a field trip that begins with a tour of City Hall, a tour of Downey’s downtown, and ends with a history and art lesson at Stay Gallery.

Kids will engage in a scaled painting project in which each student paints a portion of Lamkin’s “Downey Doodle-icious” painting, eventually coming together as a group effort mural.

“We want to instill a sense of local pride in our youth by showing them the power that community and creativity can have in city,” said Flores.

Lamkin said he was approached by Stay Gallery to help instill community pride in Downey kids.

“I am looking forward to helping with this project because I think it will be a lot of fun working with the kids of Downey educating them about our city and putting together a group art piece that we all come together to produce,” Lamkin said. “If this pilot project is as successful as we hope, it could turn into a regular activity between the schools and our arts community.”

The month of May will end with Stay Gallery exhibiting the work of a local Greek artist, done in conjunction with the Downey Greek Festival. The exhibit will be displayed May 30 to June 5.

The gallery will host two back-to-back “Greek Nights” June 1-2. Admission to the Greek Festival will be free with a physical or digital Stay Gallery flyer.

More details on Greek Nights will be announced soon.



Metro Briefs

GATEWAY CITIES

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo at El Pueblo de Los Angeles

Go Metro and celebrate Cinco de Mayo on Sunday, May 5 at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument (Olvera Street) in Downtown LA. You’ll enjoy free performances, family activities and authentic Mexican cuisine just across from Union Station. Take the Metro Red, Purple, Gold or Silver lines or any of several Metro bus lines and be steps away from El Pueblo.

Join In LA Bike Week May 13-19

Why spend money on gas and parking for trips under two miles? Bicycling is a great way to travel around a neighborhood, especially with new bikeways appearing all across LA County. During Bike Week, May 13-19, join Metro and partners to learn more about bicycling resources in your community. More information at metro.net/bikes.

Feds Award \$443,000 Grant For Bus Operator Training

The Compton and Wilshire Metro WorkSource Centers received \$443,000 in new grants from the Federal Transit Administration to provide job training to low-income individuals seeking employment as Metro bus operators. The goal of the new funding is to help hire at least 200 new operators.

Fourth Segment Launches On I-5 South

Major work on San Antonio Drive, Imperial Highway and Pioneer Boulevard in Norwalk will kick off later this month as part of the I-5 South Widening project between the 605 Freeway and Orange County. The project is adding lanes in each direction to ease the bottleneck caused when it meets the 10-lane portion at the county line.

Go Metro To The Play-Offs

STAPLES Center is poised to be play-off central for LA’s pro basketball and hockey teams and Metro is the way to get there. Metro has several connections to get to STAPLES Center including the Metro Silver, Blue and Expo lines which all let you off adjacent to the arena. For connections, visit metro.net.



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Photo by Diane and Greg Waskul

Optimist Club golf tournament raises money to help kids

• Fundraiser proceeds will benefit local charitable projects for children.

By Greg Waskul Contributor

DOWNEY – The Downey Optimist Club held its 24th Annual Charity Golf Tournament at Rio Hondo Golf Club Monday.

The tournament, known as the “Tom Watts Memorial Tournament held in memory of ‘Del’ D’Alessandro,” is the largest fundraiser of the year for the Optimist Club.

The tournament was founded by club member Tom Watts, whose passion for golf was only exceeded by his passions for his family and for helping kids in need. Long-time club member and golf tournament organizer Alfred “Del” D’Alessandro eventually took over the tournament, bringing the same commitment to excellence as Tom.

John Taormina chaired the tournament, with extraordinary support from Optimist Club members Steve Allen, Meredith Perkins, Bob Wingham, Roy Acker, Sam Mathis and Fred Donnelly.

“The community’s support is vital to allow us to keep up our good work for the youth of our community,” John said. “As one of the most active service organizations in Downey, the Optimist Club supports children throughout the community.”

“I also want to especially thank our Secretary/Treasurer Steve Allen, who went way above and beyond the call of duty this year to ensure that our tournament was a success,” he added.

The club’s local charitable work includes:

- Annually sponsoring scholarships for exceptional students graduating from Downey’s high schools. Last year, the club doubled its scholarships to six per year.
- Supporting children with disabilities throughout the year at world-renowned Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.
- Partnering with the Warren High School Humanitarian Society, whose nearly 200 members work on local charitable projects throughout the year. This school year, the

Downey Optimist-affiliated Warren Humanitarian Society will give more than 20,000 volunteer hours in the Downey area.

• Sponsoring the annual “Pumpkin Patch” at Apollo Park in Downey, which provides a safe and fun Halloween for thousands of local kids and their families. Last Halloween, more than 6,500 guests received free hot dogs, cotton candy, popcorn, donuts, sodas and helium balloons at what has become Downey’s largest event.

• Holding Essay and Oratorical Contests for local high school students. This year 12 local high school students will receive scholarships from these events.

• Making substantial annual gifts to the Arc of Los Angeles and Orange Counties, Downey Family YMCA, local Boy Scout troops, and Darrell Jackson’s Ten-Twenty Club.

As fate would have it, Darrell and his team (which included former Dodger outfielder Ken Landreaux) took first place with a net 58 in the tournament.

The big winners of the raffle at the tournament awards dinner were Johnny and Tina Venegas, who won more than a dozen prizes. Johnny and Tina bought 200 raffle tickets, as did Andy Mathis. Some of the many others who supported the tournament in a major way included Fred Donnelly, the Watts family and Johnnie D’Alessandro.

“We had a fantastic day, with perfect weather and a wonderful lunch and dinner at the Rio Hondo Event Center,” John said. “We thank everyone who attended for making it a very special day for Downey’s kids.”

Free Hearing Screenings

May 4, 2013
In honor of May as Better Hearing Month the **DOWNEY SERTOMA CLUB** will hold their annual **FREE HEARING SCREENING PROGRAM** on Saturday, May 4, 2013 at the Barbara J. Riley Community & Senior Center, 7810 Quill Drive, Downey, from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.
Appointments are recommended by calling (562) 862-9629.

MORE DOWNEY RESIDENTS MAY QUALIFY FOR WIC

• New income guidelines mean families with modest incomes may qualify.

DOWNEY – Hundreds of infants, children, pregnant teens and teenage moms residing in Downey— young people from families with modest incomes – may soon qualify for thousands of dollars’ worth of food checks from WIC.

WIC is the name commonly used for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, a federal program that has been providing participants monthly checks for nutritious foods and a wide array of health education benefits since the mid 70s.

These infants and youth were never before eligible for food checks and other WIC benefits because their parents’ incomes were too high.

The checks will enable parents to purchase a wide variety of nutritious foods at area markets.

South Los Angeles Health Projects, which manages 11 WIC centers, is appealing to the entire community to share this information with family and friends, and encouraging parents to apply for WIC if there’s a chance their children are eligible.

Who are the eligible children? They are infants and youth who have been subscribers of Healthy Families, a California program of low-cost medical, dental and vision insurance.

Parents this spring are receiving letters announcing that their Healthy Families’ children are being transitioned to Medi-Cal. This is the result of AB 1494, a bill signed last year by Gov. Jerry Brown.

Downey parents might not realize that as a consequence, many of these former Healthy Families children – not all – will qualify for WIC. The children eligible for WIC are infants, children up to age 5, and pregnant teens and new moms up to age 19.

The selection of foods is based upon the children’s needs, as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and parents’ preferences.

There are no WIC centers in Downey. However eligible residents can receive food checks and other health benefits by visiting a WIC center in nearby South Gate, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, Lynwood, Paramount or anywhere else that’s convenient.

Heidi Kent, executive director of South Los Angeles Health Projects, says she expects that many Healthy Families participants newly transitioned to Medi-Cal will soon be enrolled in WIC. “We encourage all parents who think they or their children might be eligible for WIC to find out more.”

“We are so pleased that more residents will be able to use WIC food checks to buy themselves and their children delicious, healthy foods that they might not otherwise be able to afford,” Kent said, “and to increase their food budget for the entire family.”

Pregnant women and parents of WIC participants are also offered no-cost nutrition counseling; breastfeeding education and support; group education in parenting skills, health and well-being, and referrals to community services.

“Any infants, children up to age 5, and many pregnant teens and new teenage moms—as long as they have been enrolled in Healthy Families and are now transitioning to Medi-Cal—will automatically be eligible for WIC,” Kent said. “It’s easy to apply for WIC over the phone or by walking into a local WIC center. This is true in both South Los Angeles and the rest of LA County.”

The State of California made the decision to transition Healthy Families subscribers to Medi-Cal independently of WIC. However under an existing WIC statute that applies nationwide, certain people are automatically eligible for WIC benefits when

they become Medicaid recipients (or in California, Medi-Cal recipients).

The transition from Healthy Families to Medi-Cal will affect approximately 875,000 individuals statewide. Of these, approximately 145,000 are WIC-age children, pregnant teens and new mothers expected to qualify for WIC benefits.

The California Department of Public Health, which manages the WIC Program, has not yet calculated how many youth who reside in Los

Angeles County will be eligible for WIC benefits.

South Los Angeles Health Projects is the community services department of Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center (LA BioMed).

The public can phone (310) 661-3080 to learn more about WIC eligibility and the locations of all WIC centers in Los Angeles County and beyond.

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Warren High grad opens restaurant

DOWNEY – Warren High graduate Pamela Dickinson, and her husband/partner Bryan Podgorski, have opened Tavern On the Coast in Dana Point.

The pair met while attending Le Cordon Bleu in Las Vegas and subsequently worked for Thomas Keller at Bouchon at the Venetian, Bryan as head chef and Pamela as restaurant manager.

Pamela also managed the Venetian’s three Bouchon bakeries.

Tavern On The Coast features modern American cuisine and is open daily at 5 p.m.

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SCHMIDT: Celebration of Life scheduled for May 14

Continued from page 1

and I was active in my sorority, Delta Chi Omega," Mary Lou said. She was chosen as her sorority's outstanding member during her junior year. She played softball and tennis at Pepperdine, graduating in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education with a minor in Fine Arts.

During her college days, Mary Lou met and eventually married Donald E. Schmidt, a young man from Alabama who was nine months older than her. "I met Mary Lou when I went on a double date with a friend," Don said. "Of course, she was with the friend. But after that night, I asked him if he minded if I asked her out and soon Mary Lou and I fell in love. And over nearly 60 years, our love continued to grow."

"We were married in a large, formal wedding on August 25, 1956 in the Church of Christ on the Pepperdine campus," Mary Lou said. "After college, I accepted a position as Girls Program Director at the Downey YMCA." During her five years at the "Y," Mary Lou built her girls program into the largest one of its kind in the entire United States. "I also served on the YMCA's statewide Youth and Government Steering Committee and was appointed by the governor to a special task force for youth," she added. In addition, she served on the Downey YMCA Board of Directors for many years.

"When my son Timothy was born in 1963, Don and I decided that family responsibilities would become my main priority," Mary Lou said. "We had waited many years to become parents and I didn't want to miss any of my son's early years."

It was at this point that Mary Lou's life turned toward philanthropic work in her community, where she focused her efforts for the final half-century of her life. "I was very active in PTA during the time Tim was in school, serving as PTA President at both the Middle School and High School Level," she said. "I was also active in and held offices in the Downey Council

PTA and the 33rd District PTA." For her extraordinary service, Mary Lou received both the PTA Service Award, and PTA's highest honor, the Continuing Service Award.

Mary Lou joined the Assistance League of Downey in 1979, and rose through the ranks to serve as President. "Mary Lou was president from 2007 to 2009, only the fourth woman since 1953 to serve for two years," said Joan Frey, who was installed as Assistance League President in 2011. "She was so happy and proud when Housing of Medical Emergencies, known as H.O.M.E., was built and finished in 1997 to allow families to stay in a nice place while their relative was being treated at our greatest hospital, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center."

Rick Velasquez, Chief Deputy to Supervisor Don Knabe, remembered when Mary Lou was working to raise funds to build the project.

"I met Mary Lou in the early 1990's when I got appointed as health deputy," Rick said. "She made an appointment with me to go over an idea she had about building a 'Ronald McDonald house' at Rancho. She called it that to help me understand her idea about having a temporary home for patient families while their loved one was in the hospital. At any rate, things moved forward quickly and her dream was realized."

Mary Lou helped raise much of the money required to build the 10-apartment project on the south side of the Rancho campus, and has chaired the project since its inception.

"I can still visualize Mary Lou wearing a hard hat as the H.O.M.E. was being built," said Mary Lou's good friend and fellow Assistance League member Beverly Mathis. "She not only spearheaded the development and building of the project, she personally made sure that there was always a spirit of partnership with Rancho."

"After the H.O.M.E. opened, we would talk regularly about minor problems," Rick said. "We always worked together to help maintain everything up to her standards."

"I love every patient family that

stays at H.O.M.E. while their loved one is in the hospital," Mary Lou said. "One simply can't imagine what these families have to endure in seeing a family member fighting for their life. It fills me with joy to know that we can play a small part in helping heal these families by providing a wonderful place for them to stay within walking distance of Rancho's inpatient units during the days, weeks, or months that their family member is recovering at Rancho."

"I saw a hard worker, one who was not afraid to get in and make things happen," said H.O.M.E. Resident Manager Jean Douglass. "This project was very close to her heart...she was so concerned for the comfort of our guests. She wanted to provide them with the best conditions for their stay with us no matter what their situation."

"In addition to the H.O.M.E. project, she also got me involved in her Assistance League Christmas Tree Brunch in Long Beach and I felt so lucky to meet her family," Rick said. "Every time I would see her I told her that a wonderful person she was and I told her grandkids how wonderful their grandma was. She would just smile in her own way and shrug me off with a laugh."

"I had the chance to tell her how important she was to Rancho and all of the families she helped, and she told me that was the reason she worked so hard and it was such a pleasure for her," he added.

Mary Lou's passion also extended to Downey Regional Medical Center, where she served with distinction for many years on the hospital's Board of Directors. "I was very proud to be the first woman elected to be Chairman of the Hospital Board of Directors," she said. She served in that capacity for three years. She was appointed a member of the Downey Regional Corporate Board of Directors in 2009, and also served as a member of the Hospital Memorial Trust Foundation Board.

Mary Lou and Don were honored by Downey Regional at the hospital's 2005 Charter Ball for "Mary Lou's

tireless efforts on behalf of the hospital and our community; her courageous leadership during challenging times in the healthcare industry; and her warmth that has encouraged others to give of their time, talents and treasures to the hospital; and Don's constant and considerable behind the scenes support of her efforts."

"She fought so hard to keep Downey Regional open, and to make sure that the hospital leadership was listening to the voice of the community," Don said. "She loved the hospital, and her support never wavered during the bankruptcy and all of Downey Regional's recent challenges."

Mary Lou's dedication to her community and her effectiveness as a civic leader was recognized in 2004 when the Soroptimist International of Downey honored her with its "Woman of Distinction" Award. She was also awarded the Volunteer Award from Rotary International of Downey and was named Outstanding Woman of 1998 for the city of Downey by State Senator Betty Karnette.

Mary Lou always wanted grandchildren, and in 2005, her dream came true when Tim and his wife Christy adopted two sisters from Russia. "Meeting Sasha and Katie in the International Airport Terminal at LAX was more exciting than many Christmases rolled into one," Mary Lou said. "To be in love with their pictures was one thing, but to look into those little faces with those big blue eyes was a wonder."

"Those little girls (now 10 and 11 years old) had no idea how important they had become in my life," Mary Lou said. "Walking through fire was the least of what I would do for them. Each day of my life thereafter became a joy unlike any I have ever known because of those girls. Every day from then on they were always in my thoughts."

Mary Lou's loss was immediately felt by the entire community. Supervisor Don Knabe adjourned the Board of Supervisors meeting in her honor this week.

A celebration of Mary Lou's life will be held on Tuesday, May 14, at 4 p.m. at the Rio Hondo Event Center



Photo by Diane & Greg Waskul

in Downey.

"Mary Lou was known by community members as an extremely kind person who had a profound impact on community progress and always tried her best to make things better for all," Supervisor Knabe said. "Mary Lou's passing is an incredible loss to her family and community, and she will be truly missed by all who knew and loved her."

"Mary Lou could always be relied upon," said her friend and fellow Assistance League member Charlene Roche. "She was also one of the first ones to welcome new members into the organization. She had rock-solid principles and she lived those principles every day of her life."

"I had such admiration for Mary Lou," Rick said. "What a great person she was. I will really miss her."

"I feel so fortunate to have counted Mary Lou as a close friend and colleague," Beverly said. "This gave me the opportunity to witness her devotion to her family and the dedication and passion that she gave to her many community involvements. Those of us who experienced these commitments must make it our duty to continue Mary Lou's work. She will be truly missed by the many people whose lives were touched by the very special magic of Mary Lou."

Downey teacher accused of molesting students

DOWNEY – A teacher living in Downey was arrested on charges that he sexually abused three female students at the Los Angeles charter school where he worked.

Juan Ramon Cardoza, 55, allegedly abused two 14-year-olds and a 13-year-old between Oct. 1, 2012 and March 11, 2013, authorities said.

The alleged abuse occurred at New Designs Charter School in Los Angeles.

Cardoza was charged with four felony counts of lewd act upon a child and one count of child molesting, a misdemeanor. He is scheduled to be arraigned May 15 at Compton Superior Court.

Cardoza was arrested at his Downey home on April 24. He was freed Monday after posting \$320,000 bail, according to City News Service.

If convicted as charged, he could receive a maximum sentence of more than six years in prison.

Police collect 400 pounds of unwanted drugs

DOWNEY – More than 400 pounds of potentially dangerous expired, unused and unwanted drugs were collected at a prescription drug take-back event hosted by the Downey Police Department last Saturday.

All of the drugs were properly disposed by the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, authorities said.

The event was part of a national effort to combat prescription drug abuse.

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Dominant Grizzlies perfect in league

DOWNEY – The Downey Calvary Chapel softball team currently has an overall record of 17-4 and a league record of 5-0.

The Lady Grizzlies have simply dominated their Alpha League competition and have yet to be challenged.

Marshall is in second place at 3-3, Paraclete is in third place at 2-3, the Archer School for Girls is in fourth place at 2-3 and Viewpoint is in fifth place at 1-4.

The Lady Grizzlies are fine tuning themselves for another run at the C.I.F. Division VI title. The Lady Grizzlies were the Division VI

champions in 2011.

The Lady Grizzlies defeated the Viewpoint Lady Patriots at Viewpoint 6-0 on 4/18, defeated the Archer School for Girls Lady Panthers at Columbus 10-0 on 4/22 and defeated the Paraclete Lady Spirits at Paraclete 11-2 on 4/30.

Downey Calvary Chapel will finish their league schedule by traveling to Marshall to play the Lady Eagles on 5/3, by hosting Viewpoint on 5/7 and then will host the Archer School for Girls at Columbus on 5/9 in the regular season finale for both schools.

Coach Osburn and his team are

very much looking forward to getting back to the C.I.F. Division VI championship game after injuries got in their way last year.

With the big three of seniors Larissa Petikoff (Colorado State), Bridget Castro (Utah) and Sydney Colenzo (Cal State Fullerton) playing at their best, the Lady Grizzlies will be very difficult to beat.

Things are getting ready to heat up in the C.I.F. Division VI softball playoffs.

–Mark Fetter, contributor

Bears win league title, earn No. 1 seed

DOWNEY – The Warren High School boys' volleyball team are the 2013 S.G.V.L. champions.

The Bears finished league play with a perfect 8-0 record. Downey finished in second place at 5-3 and Gahr finished in third place, also at 5-3.

Downey will get the number two league seed due to their second round victory over Gahr in league play. Playoff brackets will be released on Sunday and the Bears will know who they host in a first round playoff game at that time.

Warren defeated Paramount last week in straight sets at Warren. The Bears then traveled to Gahr on Tues-

day and defeated an overmatched Gahr squad, also in straight sets. Coach Simons is very pleased with how well his team has improved and gelled together this season. Senior libero and two-time league M.V.P. Brian Oh, senior opposite Chris Buzo, and senior outside hitter James Felix have all played well and continue to get better. Sophomore setter Gary Trejo has also played well for the Bears.

The Bears are currently ranked fourth in the latest C.I.F. Division III volleyball poll. Coach Simons believes that this year's field is wide open and that Warren has a shot to get back to the C.I.F. title game (the

Bears lost to South Torrance, now in Division II, in four sets in last year's C.I.F. Final at Cypress College).

Simons continued by saying that top ranked Camarillo, second ranked South Pasadena and third ranked San Gabriel are all quality opponents that the Bears may face.

Simons concluded by saying that he hopes city sports fans can make it out to Warren High School on Tuesday night at 7 p.m. in the "Cave" to watch the Bears play in their opening round C.I.F. Division III playoff game.

–Mark Fetter, contributor

Vikings likely to travel in playoff opener

DOWNEY – The Downey High School girls' softball team currently has an overall record of 16-10 and are 4-3 in San Gabriel Valley League play.

The Lady Vikings were defeated by cross-town rival Warren at Warren last Thursday 3-2 after losing the first game in another one run nail-biter to Warren at Downey 9-8 on 4/9.

The Lady Vikings lost to Chaminade 11-3 and Burbank 8-1 last Saturday at the Thousand Oaks Tournament in Thousand Oaks. Interestingly, Burbank was the same team that knocked Downey out of the C.I.F. Division III playoffs last year in the second round. Downey defeated Gahr at Gahr 4-1 on Tuesday and hosted Paramount yesterday (score unavailable at press time).

The Paramount contest is important to the Lady Vikings because they lost to Paramount at Paramount 3-2 on 4/16 and can knock



the unbeaten Lady Pirates out of sole possession of first place with a win. The Lady Vikings will conclude their S.G.V.L. schedule by playing at Dominguez on 5/7 and by hosting Lynwood on 5/9. The Lady Vikings should have little trouble in defeating the Lady Knights and Lady Dons, respectively.

As the season concludes, the Lady Vikings will wait for the C.I.F. Division III playoff bracket to be released. Downey will be the S.G.V.L. number three team and will most

likely be on the road to start the playoffs.

If Warren can defeat Paramount at Warren on 5/7, the Lady Bears will earn the number one league seed with a likely record of 9-1. Warren will earn that top league spot by virtue of defeating Paramount in the second round of league play and Paramount will finish in second.

There certainly is some important softball yet to be played in the San Gabriel Valley League.

–Mark Fetter, contributor

It's a three-peat for Warren swimmers

DOWNEY – The Warren High School Lady Bear swim team defeated cross-town rival Downey last Thursday, 99-71, to win the San Gabriel Valley League title for a third year in a row.

The Lady Bears finished their dual meet season with an overall record of 6-4.

Warren opened the dual meet against Downey last week with a 1-2 finish in the 200 meter freestyle from Brittney Baron and Kayla Casas. Valerie Orozco and Kim Shepherd followed suit and also went 1-2 in the 200 IM. The Lady Bears continued to earn points by taking first place in two of the three relays to seal the San Gabriel Valley League win.

The Lady Bear J.V. squad also defeated Downey 95-59 to claim the Junior Varsity swim title. The J.V. team finished their season with an overall record of 9-1 and an undefeated league record. Kelsey Flores, Brenda Gonzalez, Clarissa Garcia and Bianca Villareal have swam

solid all season and led the charge for the upstart J.V. Lady Bear squad.

Coach Cordero certainly has talent ready to fill the ranks for next season and a strong showing by her J.V. team in league point to that. Cordero is very pleased with how hard both of her teams have worked and is very much looking forward to her varsity team swimming fast in C.I.F.

The Lady Bears have been busy

this week at the S.G.V.L. preliminaries and finals (results unavailable at press time). The Lady Bears will continue on to C.I.F. next week after league finals are over and the top swimmers qualify for their respective events.

Things are certainly heating up in the pool for the Lady Bear swim team.

–Mark Fetter, contributor

Razorback sign-ups at Street Faire

DOWNEY – The Downey Razorbacks will be holding open registration for the 2013 season this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Downey Street Faire.

The league, which offers flag football, tackle football and cheerleading to boys and girls ages 5-14, will be showing off its new game jerseys and cheer uniforms at its Street Faire booth.

Registration is \$180 for tackle football and \$120 for flag football and cheerleading. Registration includes trophy, league picture package, yearbook and game socks.

All equipment is provided on loan.

For more information, or to become a coach, call Louis Morales at (310) 350-0220.

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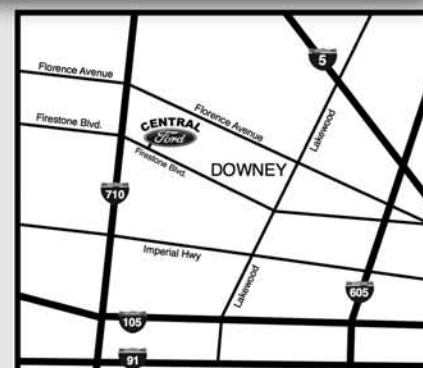
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An awards ceremony was held April 18 to honor Downey Masonic Lodge No. 220's teachers and students of the year. Worshipful Howard Phillips presided over the ceremony, which is held annually to recognize dedicated teachers and students in local public schools. Honorees included teacher Maureen Sary and student Kaytin Courtright of Alameda Elementary, teacher Carrie Voulgaris and student Alexandra Rapaio of Sussan Middle School and teacher Debra Kasner and student Caitlyn Preijers of Downey High.



Published poet Tamara Madison to share work

DOWNEY - Published author Tamara Madison will be the featured poet at the Downey Art Coalition's "Third Thursday Poetry" meeting May 16 at the Rives Mansion. Doors open at 7 p.m. for open mike sign-ups. The open mike begins at 7:30.

Madison is the author of "Wild Domestic," a collection of full-length poems, and the chapbook "The Belly Remembers."

Her work has appeared in numerous small press journals and anthologies. Two of her poems were also featured last year on Garrison Keillor's Writers Almanac.

Madison is a California native who grew up on a citrus farm in the Coachella Valley. She has two grown children and teaches French and English at a Los Angeles high school.

The poetry series is free to attend. An optional hot meal and soda are available for \$11.

Guests should enter the mansion through the driveway on Paramount Boulevard.

"Third Thursday Poetry" is curated by Lorine Parks.

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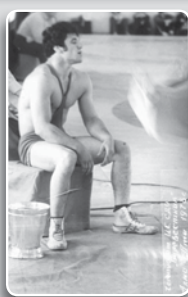
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DOWNEY – Local fans of professional wrestling take note: live wrestling is coming back to the Epic Lounge in Downey on May 26.
 MACH-1 Wrestling: "As Seen on TV" will feature wrestlers from Championship Wrestling from Hollywood (CWFH), including MIW champion Jarek Matthews, two-time champ "The Main Event" James Morgan, Andrew Hellman, Tha Chef, "Russian Superman" Sasha Darevko, tag team champs Fresh 2 Death (Leo Blaze and Josh Rozay) and The Nobodies (Luis Tapia, Angel Lopez and Bryan Weston).
 Doors open at 2:30 p.m. and bell time is 3 p.m.
 Tickets are \$12 if purchased online at brownpapertickets.com or \$15 at the door.
 The CWFH hosted a wrestling card at the Epic Lounge last year that drew a sell-out crowd.

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'Bike to School Day' celebrated Wednesday

DOWNEY - "Encouragement" is the word of the day as Downey students are being challenged to participate in the second national Bike to School Day, coming up this Wednesday, May 8.

This encouragement comes from the top down in the city, as Mayor Mario Guerra's Healthy Downey campaign and Downey City Council have registered support for the event, as well as Kaiser Permanente, local Kiwanis Clubs, and the Downey Bicycle Coalition.

In Downey, the focus is on middle schools, where it is hoped students will ride their bikes to school this coming Wednesday, under the supervision of their parents and with the help of community volunteers--and of course wearing their bike helmets as required by California law. City Council members have been invited to greet student riders as they arrive at East, Griffiths, Sussman, and West Middle Schools, which will be joining about 1,300 other schools across the nation for the occasion.

The event is being promoted through each school's morning announcements, as well as by fliers to be distributed among students. Kaiser Permanente will be offering healthy refreshments to students as they arrive at school. The City of Downey will also be providing police presence to ensure traffic safety near each of the four middle schools.

Students are also encouraged to bring bike locks in order to secure their bikes at school. Last but not least, students need to be on time to school, as the district is in the middle of spring testing.

-Lars Clutterham, contributor

Baha'i religious group plans spiritual talks

DOWNEY - The Downey Baha'i community has launched a monthly public "spiritual discussion series" that meets from 10 a.m. to noon on the first Sunday of each month at Wilderness Park.

The first meeting is this Sunday, May 5.

Anyone interested in exploring philosophical, social and spiritual topics of relevance to the local, national and global community is invited to participate in the discussions.

Featured topics may include racism, sexism, violence, peace, poverty, justice, unity, prayer, world religions and cultures, current events, books and films.

"Regardless of religious backgrounds or beliefs, we are here to help one another, learn, grow and unite as a community," said Merie Daniel Perry, a member of the Downey Baha'i and one of the organizers of the series.

For more details, or to RSVP, call (562) 440-6156 or e-mail mo.inspired1@gmail.com.

The Baha'i Faith is an independent worldwide religion founded in 1844, according to the teachings of the prophets/founders Baha'u'llah (a title translating as "Glory of God") and The Bab (translating as "The Gate").

Solar power: it's about time

By Lars Clutterham
Contributor

There's evidence that the Romans used coal in the 2nd century A.D. The Greeks, however, already had the jump on them when, in the 3rd century B.C., they defeated a Roman naval attack by burning the enemy ships' sails with solar heat reflected from mirrors.

The U.S. Department of Energy website provides a brief history of coal, including the observation that its use was first promoted in England in the 1700's because it "burned cleaner and hotter than wood charcoal." The Industrial Revolution, of course, spawned the ascendance of fossil fuel, but here in the opening decades of the 21st century, human society is beginning to come to grips with the realization that fossil fuel is not very clean at all. Moreover, it releases carbon dioxide, and current estimates put our global carbon footprint at about 1,000 TONS OF CO2 PER SECOND. Unless you're among the fast-dwindling numbers of climate change deniers, that's a sobering statistic.

Yet solar power has its own history, beyond the Greeks' military success mentioned above. Leonardo da Vinci conceptualized its use in the early 16th century. The first solar collector was invented by a Swiss scientist in 1767. The first photovoltaic cell was invented by a French physicist while still a teenager in 1839. Albert Einstein explained the photoelectric effect in 1905, for which he later received a Nobel Prize. And Exxon--yes, Exxon--became involved in significant solar research in the late 1960's.

Nowadays, solar energy applica-

tions are available for all kinds of uses, from charging your smart phone to providing electricity for your whole house. Advertisements for solar installations, whether by purchase or lease, are ubiquitous, with lots of offers trumpeting no money up front.

Unfortunately it appears that solar electricity has not generated the same kind of enthusiasm in Downey as it has in other communities throughout California, especially southern California, where we've got about as much sunlight as anybody in the country. According to Go Solar California, a collaborative effort between the California Energy Commission and the California Public Utilities Commission, in its list of the top twenty California cities for residential solar, the City of Downey is nowhere to be found.

Bakersfield is #1, followed by San Jose, San Diego, Fresno, Clovis, and San Francisco. So maybe Downey's not big enough, or perhaps its residents are not wealthy enough to afford solar.

But the rest of the top twenty cities for residential solar are generally midsized towns not much bigger or smaller than Downey: for example, Murrieta at #9, Temecula #11, and El Cajon #13, all have populations in the 100,000 range.

Or could it be that solar power is too expensive for Downey residents? The median income in Downey is about \$60,000, roughly equal to the



median income for the whole state. Yet ten of the top 20 residential solar cities in California have median incomes equal to or less than Downey's. El Cajon, Fresno, and Palm Springs are among the top twenty cities for solar, but all have median incomes less than \$44,000 per year.

Moreover, the Lancaster City Council (last in the top 20) has unanimously approved changes in its zoning code that will require developers to install solar in every new home to be built.

So what's up, Downey? Why is there not more solar power in our fair town? Is everybody happy with that 18th-century technology and its attendant costs, not only financial, but physical and environmental? Or is it time to start looking at a 21st-century alternative?

As I've mentioned previously in this column, my wife and I purchased whole-house solar four years ago in May, 2009. As this article goes to press, our solar has prevented over 20 tons of CO2 from entering the atmosphere, and we've saved about \$7200 in electricity costs. If all of Downey's 35,000-plus residential housing units had solar, that would amount to a four-year savings of 700,000 tons of CO2 and about \$250 million dollars in electricity costs.

Which raises the question: isn't it about time for solar?



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FEATURED PROPERTY



Excellent North East Downey Home
This home is located in a very desirable area of Downey. It features 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fireplace in both the dining room and living room, a lap pool and a breezeway. With 2359 sqft. of living space on over a 10,000 sq.ft. lot this property is a must see. **Call today for more information.**

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Edwin Huber



TOP PRODUCTION
Jeff Worthy



TOP SALES
Lorena Amaya & Lilian Lopez



Welcome To Golf Course Living In Downey
This custom built home with over 3,200 sq.ft. sits on a massive 16,440 sq.ft. lot and has a pristine view of Rio Hondo Golf Course on quiet cul-de-sac features 3 bedrooms upstairs and 2 downstairs, 3 baths, marble fireplace, bay window, and inviting oversized 40x20 pebble bottom pool. **Call today for more information!**



This Is The One!
Standard sale. This beautiful home is move in ready and is in a great neighborhood and location. Easy freeway access, close to shopping and parks. The property features 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom and is priced to sell at **\$379,000.**



One of A Kind Downey Estate
Drive thru Security Gate to secluded immaculate custom built home - Completed in approx 2002 with formal dining, gourmet kitchen, upstairs game room and study/library, 2 fireplaces living room and master bedroom. Pool and Pool House - Tree House with electrical and cable ready - 6 car garage. **Call today for more information.**



A Must See!
This is a beautiful tri-level home. It features wood 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms with each of the bedrooms having their own full bath. **Call today for more information on this great opportunity!**



Fantastic Opportunity
Gorgeous upgraded Bellflower home with great curb appeal, tastefully remodeled kitchen with lots of custom cabinets granite counter and stainless steel appliances and a sparkling pool. **Call today for more information.**



Price Reduction!!
This custom built 2 story home is located on a corner lot on a tree-lined street in a very desirable neighborhood. This beautiful property features 4 bedrooms with 2 master suites, 6 bathrooms, 2 fireplaces, 2 balconies and a gourmet kitchen. **Call Today for more information!**



WOW!
What a fantastic opportunity! This home features 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a living room with a brick fireplace. The home also features a family room with a stone fireplace. **Call for more information.**



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<p>DOWNEY</p>  <p>SPLISH! SPLASH! N. Downey home w/ 4BD, 3BA, living room, family room, w/fireplace, pool, 2,294 sq. ft. on a 7,380 lot. Priced at \$610,000. Call Carrie Uva 562-382-1252</p>	<p>Thank You To All My Clients!</p>  <p>AND HE DID IT AGAIN... IN ESCROW 12259 CALADRE, DOWNEY 3 BD, 1 1/2 BA, 1,595 sq. ft. built in 1962. Priced at: \$375,000. Contact Mario at (562) 533-7433 Or email: Mario@Mariopersico.com</p>	<p>AND HE DID IT AGAIN... IN ESCROW 10358 HALEDON, DOWNEY 4BD, 3BA, 2,046 sq. ft., 7,558 sq. ft. lot. Standard sale. Original owner. Contact Mario at (562) 533-7433 Or email: Mario@Mariopersico.com</p>
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