



# The Downey Patriot



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Thursday, May 16, 2013

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



Photo by Ramiro Rubio

Michael Nida's children read a statement at an afternoon press conference Wednesday.

## City settles police shooting case for \$4.5M

• Michael Nida was unarmed when he was shot five times by a Downey police officer in 2011.

By Eric Pierce and Tina Vasquez  
Editor and contributor

**DOWNEY** – The city of Downey has agreed to pay \$4.5 million to the family of Michael Nida, the unarmed man fatally shot by Downey Police on Oct. 22, 2011.

Dale Galipo, the attorney representing Nida's family in a civil lawsuit against the city, announced the settlement Monday.

According to the L.A. County Coroner, Nida was shot five times, including twice in the back.

Downey police had been investigating an ATM robbery near Imperial Highway and Paramount Boulevard when Nida, 31, ran from officers. He was shot by Officer Steven Gilley, who said he feared Nida was a "fleeing felon" who was about to take someone hostage or attempt a carjacking.

Gilley was cleared of criminal charges by the L.A. County District Attorney.

At a news conference Tuesday in front of the federal courthouse in downtown Los Angeles, friends and family of Nida said they had mixed emotions about accepting the settlement.

"It would have been nice to hear a guilty verdict from the jury, but my mom was recently in a car accident and we had to think of Michael's children," said Terri Thaxton-Teramura, Nida's sister. "We've worked very hard to protect them from things. They haven't seen any of the evidence from the case, they weren't at the scene when it happened. We're concerned for their emotional well-being. The settlement will be enough money to support them. Michael was their provider and their provider was robbed from them, so someone had to step up and provide for these kids."

Thaxton-Teramura said the settlement money will be placed in a trust for Nida's four children. They can access the money when they turn 18.

"The settlement doesn't mean this is over," Thaxton-Teramura added. "We still want to file criminal charges against Officer Steve Gilley. We want to see him prosecuted and we hope the Department of Justice reopens the case and investigates. The fight isn't over."

Jean Thaxton is Nida's aunt but identifies herself as his mother. On Facebook, she said Nida's children were "the biggest factor" in settlement negotiations.

"Our hearts were breaking, thinking they were going to have to sit in that courtroom and hear awful things said about their daddy...untrue things, but still very hurtful," Thaxton said. "We

didn't want them in there when autopsy photos were introduced. We didn't want them in there when they replayed the audio hearing their daddy saying 'I have to get to my babies.' We didn't want our babies, his babies, haunted for the rest of their lives."

The city of Downey issued a tersely-worded statement Wednesday that read, in part: "Any proposed settlement must be reviewed and approved by a federal judge. Until that time, the insurance risk pool's decisions for this matter are beyond the City's control."

"With regard to the actual facts of this case, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office report is available and provides an unbiased assessment of the shooting. The City invites anyone who is interested in the real facts to review that report."

Privately, Downey officials raised concerns after a jury last week awarded \$8.8 million to the family of an unarmed man fatally shot in Culver City. In that case, jurors deliberated only about three hours before ruling against the city.

Supporters of Michael Nida said they will continue to protest in Downey against "killer cops" and police brutality.

"People from our communities can't find justice in the courts, but we can find it in the streets. We will continue our work to change the system," said Damian Ramirez, best friend of Michael Nida and a founding member of the activist group Nida's Rydas. "We don't live in our grandparent's world and we don't want our kids living in ours. We're going to keep fighting to make sure the next generation has it better than we did, especially in the city of Downey where people complain of being racially profiled by officers all of the time. We can't keep pretending that Downey is the predominantly white suburb it used to be."

Nida's father, Michael Nida Sr., said he viewed the settlement as "an admission of guilt" on the part of the city but added that "money is not justice."

"I live in West Virginia and can't be here all the time, but it has been very hard on our family," he said. "Especially for Michael's wife and their children, who had their father taken away from them when Michael was so young and while they were so young. We're forever brokenhearted. It's like an open wound that won't heal. There is no amount of money in the world that will ever make Michael's death OK. Money is not justice. I still get a sick feeling whenever I think about it. I always ask myself, when will it be better? When will we feel OK again? When will the pain stop? It won't. The only benefit of the settlement is that things won't be so hard for the kids. It's bad enough they won't have their father, but at least they will be provided for."

## DOWNEY ENDS TALKS WITH COUNTY FIRE

• City Council not impressed with staffing levels proposed by L.A. County Fire District.

By Christian Brown  
Staff Writer

**DOWNEY** – After a lengthy discussion with city staff and Downey fire union representatives, the City Council on Tuesday decided not to proceed its negotiations with the Los Angeles County Fire District for fire and emergency services.

Councilmembers unanimously agreed that the city's needs do not fit the county fire regional mold, which would staff less firefighters at Downey stations, relying on county stations in surrounding cities to respond to emergency calls.

"There's a cost to local control. I take pride in having our own guys, but my pride is trumped by the safety of our residents," said Councilmen Roger Brossmer. "The regional approach makes sense and it will become a reality -- but we're not there yet."

The council ordered a county feasibility study last July after the Downey Firemen's Association publicly petitioned the city to disband the Downey Fire Department in order to contract with the county for fire services.

On Tuesday, Fire Chief Lonnie Croom presented the preliminary study, which was approved and forwarded to the city of Downey by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Tuesday morning.

Croom explained the differences between Downey's local approach, which benefits from maximum oversight, dedicated resources, and a customized system, versus the county's regional approach, which highlights shared resources, county-wide programs, and a system that dispatches the closest units regardless of city boundaries.

"In a local approach, we benefit from an efficient use of institutional knowledge -- guys like me who've been here for over 25 years," Croom said. "In the regional approach, you have access to 24 L.A. County fire stations in a five-mile radius -- the closest station responds to the call."

Downey Fire currently utilizes three fire engines, one truck company, and two transport paramedic vans with 18 firefighters on duty everyday, Croom said.

However, as a result of a \$1.8 million federal grant, fire engine 61, which was taken out of service due to budget cuts, will be reinstated and three new firemen will join the fire department on June 21 for a total of 21 firefighters.

Croom said county fire, based on projections from the 2012-13 fiscal year, proposed two fire engines, one paramedic fire engine, one quint, a combined engine and truck company, and one non-transport paramedic van with 16 firefighters on duty everyday.

In addition, fire prevention positions like plan checker, prevention supervisor, and fire inspector would not be housed in the city, but most likely Cerritos.

Fiscally, the study revealed that county fire service in Downey, based on the 2012-13 fiscal year, would cost nearly \$12.1 million compared to the \$13.8 million adjusted budget Croom projected for the Downey Fire Department.

Croom said the difference in savings would be roughly the same next fiscal year if the council agreed to contracted services. He also noted that switching to county fire service would result in possible layoffs and demotions of rank for current firefighters.

As council members wrestled with the idea of having only 16 firefighters in the city at one time, representatives from the Downey fire union lobbied the council to consider the fiscal chal-



Photo by Martin Trejo

Fire chief Lonnie Croom addresses the Downey City Council on Tuesday.

lenges the city has faced since the economic downturn.

"We've hit rock bottom," said Fire Captain Dan Rasmussen. "As far as cuts from services, there's no deeper to cut. We have an insufficient model and we can't go any lower."

Rasmussen continued: "This is about top notch fire protection for the best price. Yes, there might be a reduction in personnel, but not a reduction in services. In many areas of the city, a L.A. County station is closer."

Captain Jorge Villanueva, a 13-year veteran of the Downey Fire Department, echoed his co-worker's statements, petitioning the city to join the county fire district for a better quality of service for Downey residents.

"For me, this is about response times and saving lives," he said. "It's not about going county, but providing the best service for the people of Downey. L.A. County has 58 contract cities and it's proven to be effective operationally when speed counts."

Villanueva maintained that if the city continues its operations as is, Downey firefighters will eventually be stretched too thin.

"We're watching our call volumes go up and our resources shrink...where are we going to be 10 years from now?" he asked. "By moving forward with the comprehensive study, we hope that with the findings you'll see the savings."

Mayor Pro Tem Fernando Vasquez acknowledged the efforts of the fire union to improve public safety, but rejected the concept that county services were superior.

"There is a quality we get in our city. Folks, we have 21 firefighters and we already have county and Area E [assistance]," Vasquez said. "Based on this information, I'm not getting the confidence I need. I can't be supportive based on the economics and level of service."

Likewise, Brossmer struggled to accept the concept that having 16 firefighters on duty was just as reasonable as having 21 on duty.

"I'm not comfortable shedding five firemen out of our city. I don't see how that makes sense," he said. "I don't see the savings at this time and if I don't have an appetite for it, there's no reason to keep stringing anyone along."

"If we didn't have the fire engine company coming back, it'd be a different conversation," Brossmer added.

Before calling for a vote, Mayor Mario Guerra thanked the fire department for its service during tough economic times before reiterating his opposition to county fire and emergency

services.

"Last year at budget time we had a huge deficit. We asked all of our departments to make cuts," he said. "It was a calculated risk taking out fire engine 61, but we were able to bring it back."

"L.A. County Fire is one of the best in the country, but I believe Downey Fire is too. As a Downey resident, I like waking up in the morning knowing my family is safe...I'm not convinced the regional approach is there yet."

If further negotiations were approved by the council, a more detailed comprehensive evaluation from the county would have cost the city \$30,000.

City councilmembers on Tuesday also reluctantly adopted a resolution accepting the signature certification of a proposed charter amendment petition submitted by the Downey Firemen's Association in March that would amend the city charter, eliminating the two-thirds voter approval required for Downey to contract out police and fire services.

According to the Downey city clerk's office, the fire association submitted a total of 12,024 signatures, far exceeding the nearly 7,500 signatures, or 15% of the registered voters, needed to place the initiative on the ballot.

Now that the signatures have been verified by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's office, the city council will call for an election next year, allowing Downey voters to decide the fate of the measure.

Fire union officials say their charter amendment petition is in response to Downey violating its charter by hiring outside EMTs and jailers, exposing Downey taxpayers to potential lawsuits.

However, detractors believe the ballot measure is only meant to strip voters of their voice on matters of public safety by allowing the city council to contract with other local agencies for fire and police services without voter approval.

"I feel very strong about this," said Guerra. "This decision belongs to the citizens. If this petition passes, it takes away the rights of the citizens. I'm firmly opposed to this."

The council also ordered several staff reports, which will reveal the fiscal impact of the charter amendment election and its effect on housing, the quality of services, and local business retention and employment.

According to state law, the reports must be brought back to council before June 13.



## 'Gold, Guns & Girls' at Stay Gallery

**DOWNEY** – Stay Gallery will host its first solo exhibit by a female artist when it hosts a New York native who goes by the name of Changes.

The exhibit, titled "Gold, Guns & Girls," opens Friday night, May 17, at 8 p.m.

"I titled this show after my favorite song by the band Metric," said Changes.

The exhibit is sponsored by Pacific Fish Grill and Soroptimist International of Downey, a service club that works to improve the lives of women and girls in local community and throughout the world.

"Though many women have exhibited their work through the gallery, this is the first time that we have an individual show for a very talented and aspiring female artist," said Gabriel Enamorado, creative director for Stay Gallery.

"Gold, Guns & Girls" will be on exhibit through May 29.

## Shuttle mockup may be wearing out its welcome

• Two council members change their minds about \$3 million cost to house replica space shuttle.

By Eric Pierce  
Editor

**DOWNEY** – City council members are having second thoughts about constructing a \$3 million facility to house its much-celebrated space shuttle mockup.

The council unanimously agreed in January to apply for a \$3 million HUD loan to build an 18,000 sq. ft. "neighborhood center" outside the Columbia Memorial Space Center to house the shuttle replica, which was built by North American Rockwell in 1972.

The replica, named Inspiration, measures 128 feet long and is made of wood and plastic parts. It was taken out of storage last summer and in need of an extensive renovation.

Brian Saeki, community development director for Downey, said HUD would likely approve Downey's loan application but only if the city put up



the space center as collateral.

Mayor Pro Tem Fernando Vasquez and Councilman Alex Saab voted against that request Tuesday.

Saab said he had concerns about the neighborhood center's operation costs and how the city would pay down the 20-year loan.

Downey officials proposed paying the loan's interest in years 1-4, followed by 15 annual payments of

\$187,500 to cover the principal.

The interest rate is estimated at about 2.54 percent.

The city plans to use federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money to make its loan payments. However, CDBG funding has been reduced by the federal government over the last several year years, including a \$400,000 cut last year.

If CDBG funding is eliminated entirely, the city would have to find another way to make its payments, and "this could include using general fund dollars if no other funding source can be identified," Saeki said.

Downey has tried to relinquish the shuttle to other cities and even local universities but found no takers, admitted city manager Gilbert Livas.

The shuttle is currently under a tent in the former Downey Studios parking lot but it needs to be moved by next February due to construction of the Tierra Luna retail/office development.

Even fully restored, the shuttle replica is not expected to be a regional draw with the space shuttle Endeavour -- a real shuttle -- only 10 miles away at the California Science Center.

## Downey Greek Festival will be best yet, organizers say

**DOWNEY** – Now in its 29th consecutive year, the Downey Greek Festival will take place June 1-2, featuring authentic Greek dance, food, travelogues and more.

The festival has grown in each of its years and has come to be recognized for its authentic Greek food, including souvlaki (meat on a stick), gyros, barbecued lamb, spanakopita and dolmades, along with traditional homemade pastries such as loukoumades, baklava and kourambietes.

The delicacies are made by hand by the St. George Philoptochos ladies.

As in previous years, the festival will feature dance performances by St. George Greek Church's award-winning dance groups, performing authentic Greek ethnic dances. Members of the public are encouraged to join in the dance.

Tours of St. George's sixth century Byzantine-style sanctuary will be given throughout the weekend, where visitors will have the opportunity to view the newly-installed Byzantine Iconostasion (icon screen) and new Greek folk art painted on the church walls.

New this year is a cultural exhibition area featuring ethnic costumes and jewelry from various regions of Greece; a cooking demonstration; and a travelogue highlighting various parts of Greece and the sites to see when visiting.

A dietician explaining Mediterranean diet will also be on hand, next to Greek food products from the local deli.

This year's festival committee chair is Georgia Covell. The com-



mittee "worked tirelessly to ensure that this year's Downey Greek Festival will be the best ever," organizers said.

"They called for more tables, more food, more art and gift booths, raffles for a chance to win great prizes and especially more of the Greek hospitality and enthusiasm, to make it a memorable day for all," organizers said. "It promises to be an event not to be missed."

Entrance to the festival is \$2 after 4 p.m. for adults and teens ages 13-17. Seniors and kids under 12 get in free any time. Coupons for free admission can be found in the Patriot and also online at stgeorge-downey.org.

The festival is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. both days on the St. George Greek Church grounds located at 10830 Downey Ave.

For more details on the Downey Greek Festival, call the church office at (562) 862-6461.

## Rio Hondo Golf Club open house

**DOWNEY** – The Rio Hondo Golf Club, a public golf course owned by the city of Downey, will host an open house June 9 from 2-6 p.m.

The course will be open for free golf. Residents can also leisurely walk around and view the course.

There will also be golf skill demonstrations from golf professionals, golf instruction tips, putting on the greens, driving range play and access to walk on the golf cart paths.

Light refreshments and appetizers will be provided.

"This is a great opportunity to see what the Rio Hondo Golf Club has to offer," city officials said in a statement. "Come and see the course including lakes, pristine fairways, a driving range and banquet and restaurant facilities."

## Longtime resident leading historical program

**DOWNEY** – Longtime Downey resident Don Russell, who turned 94 on Tuesday, will present an informal evening of discussion and reminiscing at the Downey Historical Society's meeting Thursday, May 23.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. in the John Downey Room at the Barbara J. Riley Community and Senior Center.

Russell was in the Army during World War II and was stationed at Fort MacArthur. Among his various jobs was to drive a Helms Bakery truck.

The meeting will include a PowerPoint presentation of Downey images. Former mayor Bob Cormack will be in attendance to chime in with his own thoughts and memories.

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Downey High student wins art competition

DOWNEY - A painting by Downey High School senior Daisy Watson won first place in Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard's student art competition.

A resident of Bellflower, Daisy created her piece with water colors, pages of old books and acrylic paint.

The picture, titled "Sailing Through Thoughts," is her interpretation of finding her way "through the thought process and trying to understand all that the world can hold" for her.

Daisy said she entered the competition with encouragement from her art teacher, Darrelle Nikaj.

Second place went to Bellflower High School senior Stephanie Perez for her photograph "Soledad."

Isabel Parades, a senior at Paramount High, won third place for her photo "Frida by Jackie."

Warren High junior Donna Bellido won honorable mention for her untitled art work done in scratchboard and tempera paint.

The 120 entries submitted for the art competition were judged on originality, technical skill, artistic presentation and use of color and contrast.

For winning first place, Daisy will receive a \$1,000 scholarship, \$200 for art supplies, a trip to Washington, D.C. for herself and a parent to attend the June 26 national exhibit opening, and \$500 for travel expenses.

Stephanie receives a \$750 scholarship and \$175 for art supplies for winning second place. Third place winner Isabel will receive a \$500 scholarship and \$150 for art supplies, while honorable mention winner Donna receives a \$250 scholarship and \$125 for supplies.

Following an exhibit at the Pico House gallery, Daisy will have her entry displayed in the U.S. Capitol for one year while the remaining winning students will have their artwork displayed in Roybal-Allard's district office in Commerce.

DOWNEY MUSIC FESTIVAL STILL NEEDS SUPPORT

• Open-air music festival set for June 8; still opportunities for sponsors, volunteers.

By Marisa Urrutia Gedney Contributor

DOWNEY - Preparations continue for Make Music Downey, a music festival with over 30 performances scheduled for the downtown area on June 8.

Organizers Bea Romano and Carol Kearns, of the Downey Arts Coalition, say that additional venues had to be added to accommodate all of the performers who wanted to participate.

The main stage will be on the lawn of the First Presbyterian Church at the corner of Downey Avenue and 7th Street, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. People are invited to bring blankets and lawn chairs.

Kearns says that the title of the event, Make Music Downey, reflects its participatory and public nature. The event encourages everyone to celebrate the joy of making music - amateurs as well as professionals.

The festival's line-up for June 8 covers a wide spectrum of genres and performers, including students from Warren High and Sussman Middle School, as well as classic rock bands, indie rock groups, and a traditional Hawaiian music group.

Sligo Rags, a professional Celtic/jazz/bluegrass group that is often seen at Disneyland, will headline and close the event.

Romano says the community response to this grassroots, all-volunteer effort has been tremendous. First on board were the churches, with First Presbyterian volunteering its wide

lawn as a main venue, and the nearby Catholic church and school, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, contributing extra parking and equipment.

One volunteer designed the logo, another volunteer designed the flyers, two different people worked on the web page, and music professionals are helping with the sound systems and donating equipment. Money is still needed, however, to pay for advertising, licensing and permit fees.

The registration period for performers is closed, but Kearns says that the community can still participate as volunteers and donors by going to the website makemusicdowney.org.

Romano and Kearns say they were inspired in this effort by other Make Music festivals which have become a global tradition each June. Romano and her husband have twice played professionally at Make Music Pasadena, which will be hosting its sixth public festival this year.

Make Music New York is one of the largest events, with over 1,000 performances, big and small, in a single day.

The idea for a one-day, free, public music festival began in 1982 in Paris. Its appeal was immediate, and other cities organized similar celebrations, including Stockholm, Chicago, Denver and Vancouver.

While Downey's festival is starting small, Romano and Kearns say it will be a success if everyone has a good time. They say the time and location will make it easy for local residents to attend. It is within walking distance



Downey residents Gabriel Armenta (left), sister Celina, and brother Steven will be performing for Make Music Downey, a free, open-air music festival, on June 8.

of the Saturday Farmers Market, and some of the small venues, such as Mambo Grill, are right at the market.

This is not Romano's first contribution to the music scene in Downey. Four years ago she organized the Folk Jam which is held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Barbara J. Riley Community and Senior Center at Apollo Park. "Folk" music for this group is a loose term, because the group is as likely to play jazz standards and Beatles tunes as well as Irish jigs. She and her husband used to perform at the Nordic Fox before it closed, and now perform at Mambo Grill.

Kearns is a board member of the

Brookshire set for repaving

DOWNEY - A more than 1-mile stretch of Brookshire Avenue, between Downey Regional Medical Center and Imperial Highway, will be repaved this summer.

The city council awarded the \$1.3 million contract to Sully-Miller Contracting Company on Tuesday. Design, inspection and engineering costs push the total project cost to about \$1.77 million, although the city has budgeted about \$2 million.

Sully-Miller will replace street pavement and make repairs to curbs, gutters, sidewalks and driveways. It will also adjust manholes and replace traffic signal loop detectors, while painting new striping and pavement markings.

Mayor Mario Guerra voted against the contract, arguing that Lakewood Boulevard, between Florence Avenue and Telegraph Road, was in worse shape.

"I don't feel like we're getting the maximum bang for our buck," the mayor said.

Public works officials, however, said repairing Lakewood Boulevard would be significantly more expensive. Also, city officials said they are waiting for Southern California Edison to relocate its utilities underground before the city begins street repairs.

Work on Brookshire Avenue is expected to begin in June and wrap up in September.

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Ray Brown, center, with surveyors from CARF International.

## Arc earns highest accreditation

**DOWNEY** – The Arc Los Angeles & Orange Counties has earned the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded by CARF International, an independent accreditor of health and human services.

CARF awarded a three-year accreditation in Community Employment and Organization Employment Services, which covers The Arc's employment center and vocation education center, including the Southeast Industries packaging and assembly plant.

It is the seventh consecutive three-year accreditation The Arc has earned.

To earn the accreditation, The Arc put itself through a rigorous peer review process and demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit that its programs and services "are of the highest quality, measurable and accountable."

"We are proud to receive the highest accreditation and our thanks go to the outstanding staff that keep the services going every day, a dedicated board of directors and a community that supports people with disabilities," said Ray Brown, president of The Arc.

The Arc is a private, non-profit organization that provides services for people with intellectual and development disabilities. Its offices are located in Downey.

For more information about The Arc, call CEO Kevin MacDonald at (562) 803-4606, ext. 223.

## FROM U.S. BANK CARPORTS: SOLAR POWER

• Local bank installs solar panels as part of its environmental sustainability mission.

By Lars Clutterham  
Contributor

**DOWNEY** – At first glance, it appears that the Florence Avenue branch of U.S. Bank has just installed carports for its customers. That's certainly a nice amenity, one that will be much appreciated by U.S. Bank patrons in sunny southern California.

But on closer inspection, those parking canopies serve a much more significant purpose: namely, they house a solar panel installation that is now providing electrical power for this local U.S. Bank branch. The Downey location is in fact one of eight branches in southern California which have built similar facilities since design and planning began last fall. The overall capacity of all locations is expected to approach one megawatt.

At the end of a six-month turnaround from design to installation, eight of nine planned southern California locations are either now up and running or will be soon, with all but two utilizing parking canopies to support the solar panels. (The remaining two turned out to be more feasible as rooftop arrays.) Other cities with branches participating in the project are Claremont, Fullerton, Los Alamitos, Mission Viejo, Rancho Cucamonga, and San Diego.

U.S. Bank is collaborating on these projects with SolarCity, one of the nation's largest and most re-

spected providers of solar energy. The idea for solar carports originated from within U.S. Bank, but all the project's funding came from SolarCity, which will maintain ownership of the solar installations while offering 20-year price guarantees to U.S. Bank through what's described in their joint news release as a Power Purchase Agreement, saving U.S. Bank money through "cost avoidance" by keeping solar rates under the utility's electrical rates. The PPA is not the only means through which U.S. Bank has financed its renewable energy projects. At one of its locations, in Clayton, Missouri, a solar array was purchased outright. The bank is also considering lease agreements as well—options, it should be pointed out, also available to the potential residential user.

While making and saving money plays an important role in this collaborative venture, it's evident from talking to executives at both companies that this enterprise is about much more than money. In fact it's clear that both SolarCity and U.S. Bank have long-term commitments to providing leadership by example in the development and use of renewable and sustainable energy, especially, in the case of U.S. Bank, as it is able to simultaneously inform and educate its customers and employees.

U.S. Bank's website, for example, offers a virtual tutorial for sustainable business on its "Environmental Sustainability" page. The bullet points of that page's mission statement bear repeating here:

"At U.S. Bank, we believe we can help protect and conserve our natural resources by:

- developing less resource-intensive business practices.
- embracing opportunities for financial products and services that incorporate features or benefits for reduced environmental impact.
- investing in environmentally beneficial business opportunities.
- engaging and educating employ-



Photo courtesy U.S. Bank

Newly-installed solar panels provide electrical panel to the U.S. Bank branch on Florence Avenue.

ees and customers."

Those concepts are certainly worthy of consideration by Downey businesses, for U.S. Bank has, in keeping with its philosophy, provided a tangible example to the Downey community of how to move forward towards more sustainable energy use.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Bank branches which house these new SolarCity-built solar arrays are looking forward to grand openings in the near future, and thus far have received "nothing but positive responses" from their customers. One enhancement under consideration from the standpoint of customer education is the possibility of real-time data displays, possibly on kiosks, that would let customers know how much energy is being gen-

erated and how much greenhouse gas production is being averted through each renewable energy installation. Moreover, U.S. Bank is also alert to the possibility of other kinds of renewable energy in addition to solar, as well as expansion of the carport solar concept.

So what will the environmental impact of these new solar carports be? Over the course of their lifespans, U.S. Bank projects that these solar installations, including the Downey Florence Avenue branch, will reduce CO2 emissions "by more than 35 million pounds, which is equivalent to taking 3,068 cars off the road or planting more than 19,000 trees."

## Discount pet adoptions

**DOWNEY** – Dog and cat adoptions at SEAACA will be discounted 15 percent on Saturday, May 25.

Adoptions include first set of vaccinations, flea treatment, dog or cat toy, pet health guide, spay or neuter, microchip and registration.

The discount also applies to puppies and kittens. SEAACA is at 9777 Seaca St. in Downey.

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## Downey High top in Dig Pink fundraising

**DOWNEY** - Downey High School was the top fundraising school in the nation for the 2012 Dig Pink Rally, raising more than \$15,300 to fight breast cancer.

Downey High began Dig Pink fundraising in 2010 at the urging of volleyball coach Andrea Sims.

The fundraiser culminates with a heated volleyball game between rivals Downey and Warren High School.

"I figured if we could put that much effort into wanting to destroy the other team, then we could combine our passion and use it to raise awareness for a worthy cause," said Sims. "For one night, no more school colors, just packing the place pink."

Proceeds from Dig Pink benefit the Side-Out Foundation, which works to advance clinical trials and increase patient support services for breast cancer patients and their families.

"Just as throwing a pebble onto a lake seems of little consequence while the ripples continue to make their way to the distant shore, so was the beginning of the Dig Pink fundraiser back in September 2010," said Sims, an English teacher. "Five thousand dollars was that pebble in an ocean of want for those lost to or fighting breast cancer, but for DHS volleyball, the ripple effect has produced healing not only between our two rival high schools but has helped our community unite behind a common goal."

Nationwide, high schools, middle schools and colleges raised more than \$1.1 million for the Side-Out Foundation this year.

## PREP ROUNDUP: teams wrapping up their seasons

By Mark Fetter Contributor

**DOWNEY** - The Downey High School baseball team currently has an overall record of 15-13 and finished league play with a record of 6-9.

The Vikings are the number four entry in the C.I.F. Division III playoffs from the San Gabriel Valley League. Gahr (20-5, 13-2) was the league champion and number one entry. Paramount (18-9, 12-3) was the number two entry and Warren (19-9, 9-6) was the number three entry.

Downey played in a wildcard game on Tuesday against Rialto (17-10, 11-4) at Rialto and won 7-0 behind a strong pitching effort from Randy Labaut. The Vikings traveled to Palm Desert yesterday for their first round matchup at Palm Desert (20-8, 11-1). The score was unavailable at press time.

Downey has won four of their last five games, including their wildcard win Tuesday. Downey defeated Dominguez 12-0 at Dominguez on 4/30, defeated Dominguez 11-0 at Downey on 5/3, defeated Lynwood 5-2 at Downey on 5/7 and lost to Lynwood 5-0 at Lynwood on 5/9.

The Downey High School boys' volleyball season came to an end last Thursday against top seeded Camarillo at Downey, 25-18, 25-21 and 25-17 in the second round of the C.I.F. Division III playoffs.

Downey defeated Santa Ana at Downey on May 7, 25-17, 25-13 and 25-21 in their first round matchup.

The Vikings finished their season with an overall record of 18-8 and a league record of 5-3. Coach Rand said he was pleased with his team's hard work and effort. Rand main-

tains that "our success is based upon good kids working hard."

The Downey High School softball team currently has an overall record of 20-10 and finished league play with a record of 7-3. The Lady Vikings are the number three entry in the C.I.F. Division III playoffs from the San Gabriel Valley League.

Warren (20-7, 9-1) was the league champion and number one entry and Paramount (13-11, 8-2) earned the number two entry. Downey is currently ranked 17th in the C.I.F. Division III poll and are ranked seventh in the latest Long Beach Press-Telegram area poll.

Downey played Tuesday at Santa Fe (12-11) in a wildcard game and defeated the Lady Chiefs 11-5 behind a strong pitching effort from Anissa Hamilton. The Lady Vikings lost a double header to the Lady Chiefs earlier this season, 4-3 and 7-4, at Santa Fe.

The Lady Vikings faced Division III top seed Highland (24-4) at Highland yesterday in the first round of the playoffs (score unavailable at press time).

The Downey Calvary Chapel softball team are the number two seed in the C.I.F. Division V playoffs. The Lady Grizzlies finished their regular season with an overall record of 20-4 and a league record of 8-0. The Lady Grizzlies are the 2013 Alpha League champions.

DCC hosted Lompoc (12-10-1, 7-5) on Thursday at Columbus High School (score unavailable at press time). Lompoc defeated Azusa (9-12, 7-7) 12-1 in a wildcard game on Tuesday to advance.

The Lady Grizzlies will continue to ride the strong right arm of pitcher Larissa Petakoff (Colorado State) throughout the playoffs. Senior

standouts catcher Sydney Colenzo (Cal State Fullerton) and shortstop Bridget Castro (Utah) continue to lead the charge for the DCC C.I.F. Division V title run. The Lady Grizzlies were C.I.F. Division VI champions in 2011.

The Warren High School softball team finished their regular season with an overall record of 20-7 and a league record of 9-1 to win the San Gabriel Valley League championship.

Warren hosted a first round playoff game yesterday against Kaiser (15-12, 9-6). There was no score available at press time. Kaiser defeated Knight (14-9, 9-5) on Tuesday in a wildcard game.

The Bears are ranked 7th in the latest C.I.F. Division III poll but are not seeded for the playoffs. Highland is seeded first, Burbank is seeded second, California is seeded third and Bishop Amat is seeded fourth, respectively. The Bears have been playing well and Coach Starksen is pleased with the improvement she has seen as the season has moved forward. The Bears are looking forward to making a deep run in the C.I.F. Division III playoffs.

The Warren High School girls' swim team has seen their season come to a close. The Bears finished C.I.F. last weekend in Riverside and had several standout swimmers receive attention for their efforts. Four Lady Bear swimmers returned to compete in the finals. Valerie Orozco placed 11th in the 200 IM and 6th in the Butterfly. Kim Shepherd placed 16th in the 500 Freestyle.

Valerie Orozco, Kayla Casas, Kim Sheperd and Destiny Hernandez placed 11th in the 400 Freestyle relay. According to Coach Cordero, new school records were set in the 100 Butterfly, 500 Freestyle and the 400

Freestyle relay. Cordero further said that "every race was a best time, with the most impressive race being the best for last. The 400 Freestyle relay dropped 5 seconds from their season best time."

Cordero concluded by saying that "the team finished 20th of 50 scoring teams there. A respectable finish given that we moved up a division in swimming this year."

Warren boy standout swimmer Brandon Yi finished in 11th place in the 100 Breaststroke. Yi's time of 1:03.74 marked his personal best time. Warren Boys' coach Rick Nichols is proud of his senior's accomplishment and how hard he has worked to get there.

The Warren High School baseball team finished their season with an overall record of 19-9 and a league record of 9-6. Warren, the number three team from the S.G.V.L., was defeated at home Tuesday by Cathedral City (14-15, 6-6) 5-0 in a wildcard game for the C.I.F. Division III playoffs.

The Bears made a nice run this season by winning 12 straight games and 18/19 at one point. The Bears led the San Gabriel Valley League standings from the beginning of league play until the next to last week of the season. Tough late season losses

to Paramount and Gahr had the Bears finish in third place in the final league standings.

Coach Pearson had a young team this season with several standout underclassmen who will return next year with more experience and skill under their belts. Things are certainly looking up and heading in the right direction for Warren baseball.

The Warren High School boys' volleyball team has seen their season come to an end as well. The Bears finished their season with an overall record of 20-8 and a league record of 8-0. The Bears are the 2013 San Gabriel Valley League champions.

Warren defeated Placentia Valencia at home on 5/7 by the scores of 25-20, 25-16 and 25-17 in the first round of the C.I.F. Division III playoffs. The Bears then defeated San Marino at San Marino on 5/9 by the scores of 21-25, 25-16, 25-22 and 25-22. The Bears played a nailbiter at Crossroads last Saturday in the third round and came up short. Warren lost in five sets 19-25, 24-26, 25-20, 27-25 and 18-16.

Coach Simons is very proud of his team and the strides they made this season. Warren will reload for next season and once again put another quality team on the court.

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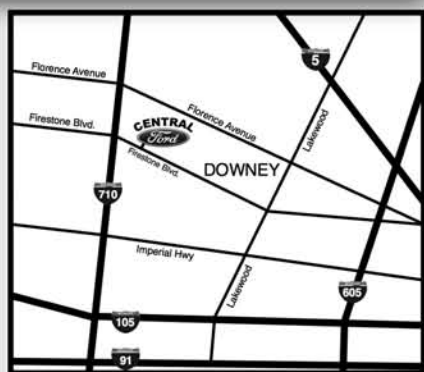
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### Warren High students raise \$30K

**DOWNEY** – Warren High School students raised more than \$30,000 to benefit the school district's TLC Center.

The fundraising campaign, titled "Pennies for TLC," prompted competitions between different classrooms to see who could raise the most money for TLC, a resource center that provides counseling, low cost health insurance and other services for needy Downey students.

The TLC Center operates solely on charitable contributions and foundation grants.

Many teachers got involved in the fundraising as well, coordinating on fundraising events with local shops and restaurants.

"What an amazing group of people who are supporting children's health programs in their own community and their own school as funds raised go directly back to Downey students," DUSD officials said in a statement. "Way to show that character counts, Warren Bears!"

### Drama students to present murder mystery

**DOWNEY** – Downey High School's drama department will perform John Bishop's "The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940," opening in June.

The production takes place in New York, 1940. A group of theatrical people gather in a mansion for what seems like an audition. Instead, they find themselves caught in a serial killer's game.

To make matters worse, they must try to stay alive while trapped in a terrible winter storm.

Performances are scheduled for June 7-8 and June 14-15 at 7 p.m. in the campus's D. Mark Morris Hall.

All tickets are \$6 at the door.



Downey High School's dance team wrapped up a successful year, winning more than 7 first place trophies for their hip-hop, jazz and contemporary routines as well as taking home the Judges and Top School awards at two SHARP competitions. They recently concluded their season with their dance recital, titled "Dance Review 2013," hosted at the Downey Theater. The program showcases the talents of all three dance classes offered at Downey High.

### Downey High open house Thursday

**DOWNEY** – Downey High School is hosting its annual open house and "Future Viking Night" this Thursday, May 23, when prospective students are encouraged to visit the campus and learn more about the school.

The day begins with a meeting in the gymnasium from 5:30-6:30 p.m., followed by open house classroom visitations and demonstrations from 6-8.

Students and teachers from all departments and Career Technical Education (CTE) classes will conduct demonstrations and experiments in their classrooms and throughout the campus to showcase their program and their students' work.

The Fine Arts Department will host its annual art show in the gym, featuring student work from all art classes.

Downey High dance, jazz ensemble and advanced choir will perform live on the Rally Stage.

Dinner will be available for purchase from Frantone's Pizza and Tacos Taco.

### Tax firm offers business workshop

**DOWNEY** – Local business owners – or potential business owners – are invited to a free workshop Tuesday at Tax-411 in Downey.

Visitors will learn how to avoid IRS penalties and audits; 2013 government tax changes and benefits; tax planning tips; payroll differences between employee and self-contractor; and compliance awareness.

Registration begins at 6 p.m. and the workshop gets underway at 6:30. Reservations are requested by calling (562) 869-4000.

Tax-411 is at 11455 Paramount Blvd., Suite A.

### YMCA to honor supporters

**DOWNEY** – Community leaders Bill and Katie Hare, along with the Downey Kiwanis Foundation, will be honored by the Downey YMCA during a gala event June 2 at the Long Beach Yacht Club.

The 150-person formal affair is the Downey YMCA's signature awards dinner, which honors integral supporters of the Y and the Downey community.

The evening begins with hors d'oeuvres at 5 p.m., followed by a silent auction, dinner program and live auction.

For more information, call (562) 862-4201.

### Composer, conductor duet at Downey temple

**DOWNEY** – Congregants of Temple Ner Tamid will be treated to an evening service on Friday, May 17, with several compositions by Cantor and renowned composer Stephen Richards.

He will join Cantor Ken Jaffe in selections of his sacred vocal solos and duets accompanied by organist Norberto Guinaldo.

The concert/service is open to the public and begins at 7:30 p.m.

As a composer, Cantor Richards has fulfilled commissions for numerous organizations including the chorus of the San Francisco Symphony. His chorale cycle, "Songs of the Mountain" was recorded in 2007 after being performed in Walnut Creek and Oakland.

His "Prayer, A Suite for Oboe and Strings," was recorded by the Krakow Symphony Orchestra and has been performed by the South Bay Chamber Symphony in 2011. Other works include: "Songs of a Survivor" and "Ballad of Ruth" which was recently performed in a chamber version at Stephen S. Wise temple in Los Angeles.

Cantor Kenneth Jaffe is a graduate of the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He has served congregations in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Missouri and in California, where he is Temple Ner Tamid of Downey's Cantor.

Prior to entering the cantorate, Cantor Jaffe sang opera professionally throughout the United States, having performed dozens of roles in several opera companies.

Cantor Jaffe's bibliography, "Solo Vocal Works on Jewish Themes: A Bibliography of Jewish Composers," is published by Scarecrow Press and is considered the most extensive Jewish music bibliography published in the last 60 years.

His songs have been published by Transcontinental Music and are sung in many congregations around the country. He is also a specialist in music for Jewish religious, day and preschools, and has recorded a CD of original songs for children.

Cantor Jaffe has concertized throughout the country and was chosen as the tenor soloist in a work written by Ben Steinberg for the American Conference of Cantors' 50th Annual Convention.

He is married to nationally known drama educator, Deanna Ableser. The couple have two daughters.

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West Middle School's Advanced Drama students will perform the musical "Grease" May 30-31 in the school cafeteria.

Performances are at 3:30 and 6:30 p.m. both days. Admission is free.

Seventh and eighth grade advanced drama students "have been working hard over the last four months learning countless songs and dances," said drama teacher Andrea Pyle. "We'd love to invite the entire community of Downey to come and see their hard work."



## Downey oil painter to demonstrate work

DOWNEY - Elsa Van Leuven, a talented artist who has performed as a soloist with the Los Angeles Opera and Downey Symphony Orchestra, will be guest demonstrator when the Downey Art League and Traditional Artists' Guild of Paramount meet Saturday at Progress Park Plaza in Paramount.

The meeting begins at 2 p.m. and is free.

In addition to music, Van Leuven is also a talented oil artist. Her paintings hang throughout the U.S.,

Canada and England, including in local Southern California galleries.

She currently teaches in adult education in La Mirada.

Progress Park is at 15530 Downey Ave.

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## Downey movie club marks five months

• Movie Club of Downey indulges in independent and foreign films; the group meets monthly.

By Nancy Carballo Contributor

**DOWNEY** - For the last few months, Movie Club of Downey has been featuring movie gems on the big screen at the Epic Lounge on 2nd Street.

Movie Club was first conceived in 2009 by movie aficionado Pat Gil. In January of this year, Movie Club officially found its public domain at the Epic Lounge and has been only getting stronger.

Movie Club is all about masterpiece treasures like indie and foreign films that get the noggin turning Clockwork Orange-style and the heart pounding like a V8 engine. Previous showings include "The Secret in Their Eyes," "Dangerous Liaisons," "Once," and "The Hunter". Events incorporate awesome raffle prizes like movie theatre tickets, DVDs, and soundtracks.

For know-it-alls or playful spirits, the movie news and trivia segments are perfect! You can enjoy some delectable LA Buns on café-style tables while viewing the film. There's also an intermis-

sion so you can stretch your legs while grabbing a drink at the bar or while discussing the film with others.

Attendees are encouraged to bring appetizers or desserts for extra raffle tickets that increase their odds at winning more prizes. The lounge even got all decked out on Oscar day with a red carpet and a larger-than-life sized golden boy. Sponsors LA Buns, Moving Still Pictures, and Style and Beauty Salon make all of this financially possible.

A team of serious movie fans and creative talents from Downey Arts Coalition make these events fun and ultra-memorable. DÁ@cor, audio/video, and general line-up of cool happenings are brought to you by Pat Gil, Polaris Castillo, Julian Park, and Eloisa Ball.

Pat Gil is the connoisseur of all things film-related and serves as one of the Event Producers for the Downey Arts Coalition. Polaris Castillo is a film-maker who has created five well-received short films such as "BalloonHead" as well as several music videos. Julian Park is also a film-maker, having already made various documentaries under his company Handi, including "Bumblebee Loves You" and "Homeless in Downey", which documented the counting of the

homeless in Downey. Eloisa Ball is a diligent event asst. coordinator who keeps Movie Club, as well as many other DAC events, afloat and neatly tied together.

"The Visitor" is the carefully-selected feature for the month of May. The lead role is played by Richard Dale Jenkins, who was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actor. "The Visitor" represents what the Movie Club stands for: appreciation of art, love of music, social consciousness, and political messages that motivate.

Rotten Tomatoes describes "The Visitor" as "a heartfelt, humanistic drama that deftly explores identity, immigration, and other major post-9/11 issues." The movie boasts an 89% on the Tomatometer, with critics and movie watchers enjoying it alike.

Because of the significance of drums in the storyline, Movie Club has decided to book live music by Bravo Trauma for this

special day of celebration, marking its 5th month of existence, and DAC's "Make Music Downey", an up-coming music event on June 8. Attendees are encouraged to bring percussion instruments to play along too.

Movie fans are sure to leave feeling inspired and renewed, as they have done at previous Movie Club events.

*Movie Club takes place every third Sunday of the month at the Epic Lounge from 1:30 to 5 PM. Movie Club is a celebration of well-crafted movies, and all of its events are absolutely free, but donations for DAC are welcomed. Epic Lounge is located at 8239 2nd St., Downey.*

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