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# INTRODUCTION

I hope the Downey Chamber of Commerce has room in its budget next year for a new pair of scissors, because its current pair is surely worn out.

Mia Vasquez, events manager for the Downey Chamber of Commerce, says the chamber helped coordinate 42 ribbon-cuttings between January and November, confirming that Downey's 2014 was a year marked by new store arrivals, grand re-openings, and the general optimism that the local economy is on the upswing.

The coupes de grace were the twin openings of Chick-fil-A and Dunkin' Donuts, both on Firestone Boulevard, the latter featuring a 24-hour drive-thru. We also received the Lock & Key Social Drinkery – a bar with non-standard bar food – and a Habit Burger, which opened a few weeks ago next to Chick-fil-A.

Truth is, there is no surer way to make residents happy than to offer new options on where to eat.

But 2014 wasn't all about food. Mayor Fernando Vasquez pushed the city to be innovative and more inclusive of its younger residents. To that end, Downey hosted several large-scale public events that embraced the city's diversity, most notably a FIFA World Cup viewing party last July that brought thousands of people to the downtown district. There also was the International Food Festival, a global rooftop concert series, and the return of a Dia de los Muertos festival.

Each of these events was pioneering (for Downey) and helped to lead Downey away from its long-held reputation of being a octogenarian community lacking flair and originality. Shedding that reputation remains a work in progress.

Downey's efforts to remain a contemporary and progressive city, however, can sometimes run head-on against a conservative segment of the population that clings to a sort of utopia vision of "old Downey." This was most obvious when Club DB Lounge, a nightclub at Firestone Boulevard and La Reina Avenue, received preliminary approval from the Planning Commission in July to hire go-go dancers, sparking outrage from residents who objected to the dancers' sexualization.

"We are a city of values that holds good character in high regard," the mayor said at the time. "This sends the wrong message to our Downey families."

Go-go dancers are no big deal in places like Hollywood, Pasadena or even Fullerton, but in Downey, the suggestion of scantily-clad women dancing on platforms unleashed a tidal wave of controversy that eventually forced exasperated nightclub owner Hayk Gevorkyan to rescind his request.

But while go-go dancers may be gone (for now), the big picture issue remains: how conservative does Downey want to be? What are the boundaries? The World Cup viewing party, for example, was a city-sponsored event that featured Brazilian belly dancers shaking and shimmying on public streets, and nobody complained (that I'm aware of). Why? My guess is any person so easily offended by a belly dancer probably isn't the demographic who would show up at a World Cup viewing party anyway.

The same argument was used for go-go dancers. If you don't like it, don't go to the club. But couldn't the same be said for strip clubs and tattoo parlors (notice there aren't any in Downey)? At what point does a business cross from decent to indecent? And who makes that determination?

It's actually a fascinating discussion to have, with no right or wrong answers.

In the last few years, and in 2014 especially, Downey has found itself in a rapid state of growth, culturally and economically. Let's hope that growth continues well into 2015 and beyond.

Thanks for reading,

Eric Pierce  
Editor

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Downey 2014 A Year to Remember  
is an end-of-the-year publication produced by **Downey Patriot**.

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# JANUARY

■ The Downey Rose Float Association's entry in the Tournament of Roses Parade won the Founders' Trophy for "most beautiful float built and decorated by volunteers from a community or organization." Downey's float, "The Glass Slipper," was seen by millions of television viewers around the world, including 200 countries.

■ PIH Health Hospital - Downey welcomed the first baby of the New Year Jan. 1 at 7:14 a.m. Nathan Christopher weighed in at exactly 6 pounds and was 18 1/2 inches long. It was the first child for parents Chris Ibarra and Nancy Ballon, who were presented with a gift basket filled with newborn necessities courtesy of delivery room staff.

■ Downey's 171-pound wrestler Juan Soto earned Upper Weight MVP at the Viking Invitational wrestling tournament. Soto had three pins, a decision, and one bye.

■ The parents of a 4-month-old girl were charged with the death of their daughter on New Year's Eve. Ashley Debra Jones and Johnathan Lucero, both 23, were charged with murder and child abuse after their baby girl died Dec. 31. A preliminary investigation from the L.A. County Coroner's office revealed the baby was malnourished and died from blunt force trauma.

■ Patty Rodriguez, a Downey resident and producer of "On-Air with Ryan Seacrest," launched a jewelry line called "Mala" (a word that means "bad" in Spanish).

■ With competing offers from the Downey Family YMCA and the Downey Museum of Art to operate programming out of a vacant building at Furman Park, the City Council went with the YMCA. The DMOA had operated out of the Furman Park building since 1957, but the museum closed in 2009. After renovations, the YMCA plans to use the 5,000 sq. ft. building for community classes aimed at children and seniors.

■ The city of Downey announced two new hires at City Hall: public works director Mohammad Mostahkami and finance director Anil Gandhi.

Mostahkami was a public works director and engineer in South Gate for 16 years prior to coming to Downey, while Gandhi was talked out of retirement after 30 plus years with West Hollywood and other cities.

■ "Babel," a sound-art performance by Roy Anthony Shabla, debuted to rave reviews at Stay Gallery. Reviewer Don Marshall wrote that the show "offers an unforgettable, profoundly moving, deeply human, and permanently ear-opening experience."

■ Farmers & Merchant Bank opened its Downey branch at the intersection of Lakewood and Firestone boulevards.

■ A free stroke seminar at the Rio Hondo Event Center was credited with saving the lives of two residents diagnosed with "a significant narrowing of their carotid arteries." The screenings were offered courtesy of the RTH Stroke Foundation.

■ The L.A. County Coroner ruled that Dodi Soza, the Downey High junior varsity football player who collapsed on a football field three months earlier, died of heart failure. Medical examiners listed Soza's primary causes of death as a sudden cardiac event and anoxic encephalopathy, a shortage of oxygen to the brain. Kelsey Soza, Dodi's older sister, said shortly before his death, her brother was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a cardiac disorder that impedes blood flow out of the heart and can sometimes cause sudden death in young athletes.

■ "Loveland", a whimsical, romantic film about a construction worker who also fixes broken hearts, had its premiere at the Epic Lounge.

■ Donald James Vincent, a 30-year-old ice skating coach, was convicted of sexually abusing children at his Downey home. He was later sentenced to 98 years to life in prison.

■ St. John Bosco wrestler Aaron Pico, 17, turned professional, signing with a mixed martial arts promoter. Pico was the state wrestling champion as a freshman at 132 lbs.



Wendy Diaz and Monique Flores, of Downey, were one of 34 couples married live at the Grammy Awards. "The experience has been nothing but positive and wonderful," said Wendy.

■ St. John Bosco's football team, ranked No. 1 in the nation, won the state championship after defeating De La Salle, 20-14. Ten Bosco players would go on to sign letters of intent with colleges and universities around the country.

■ Downey High's wrestling team claimed the league title after defeating 2013 champ Paramount.



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## For Dorothy Pemberton, volunteering is a way of life

By Eric Pierce

When people ask what makes Downey special, the answer is easy: the people. Residents of Downey are, for the most part, educated on local issues and invested in the community.

Downey residents – again, for the most part – are generous, both with their time and money. It’s the reason we have so many thriving service clubs that continuously work to enrich our town. One such example of an extraordinary citizen is Dorothy Pemberton who, besides her philanthropy, has the unwavering ability to instantly light up a room with her infectious smile and larger than life personality.

And for a person who gives so much so constantly, she is conspicuously absent from headlines and limelight.

“I’ve never done things for the publicity,” Pemberton, dressed in a crisp taupe business suit, said over coffee recently. “I like the feeling of getting things done. That’s the reward.”

Born in Huntington Park to a Romanian father and Lithuanian mother, Pemberton and her family lived in South Gate for one year before moving to a single-family home on Cheddar Street in south Downey. She attended Lewis Elementary, Woodruff Junior High (now the Downey Adult School) and Downey High, graduating in 1975.

She was quiet and shy in school, a middle-of-the-pack student, not drawing much attention to herself and preferring to go largely unnoticed. It didn’t help that Pemberton’s parents divorced while she was in high school.

Pemberton’s life took a pivotal turn in 1985, when she made the decision to obtain her California real estate license. It was a fortuitous decision for Downey as well, because it signaled the start of Pemberton’s active community service.

She joined Soroptimist International of Downey in 1986, and has served nearly all of its executive positions, including president.

(She is currently assistant treasurer.)

“Sam Mathis was my workout buddy at the time, at the old gym that was underneath Stonewood,” Pemberton remembers. “He wanted to introduce me to his wife [Beverly] who belonged to Soroptimist. So one day after the gym I followed Sam home to meet Bev. There I am standing in my leotard and Sam is introducing me...Oh, what she must have thought.”

In 1992, Pemberton joined the San Antonio Guild of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, and from there she was off and running. She helped build Downey’s first Habitat for Humanity house in 1995, which is the same year she joined the board of Downey Ponytail, a girls’ softball league. Pemberton and other board members were instrumental in getting a snack shack built at Independence Park.

Four years later she was appointed to Downey’s Parks and Recreation Committee. That same year – 1999 – she joined the Downey YMCA board of directors.

She was named the PTA’s Woman of the Year in 2008, and despite her two daughters (Whitney and Shelby) already graduating out of the Downey Unified School District, still serves as Downey Council PTA president.

Pemberton also was involved with Girl Scouts for 15 years, and served as co-chair of the Yes on Measure O committee this year, the \$248 million school bond proposal.

Are we forgetting anything? Probably.

During all of this, Pemberton earned a master’s degree and teaching credential from Cal State Long Beach, allowing her to serve as a substitute teacher in the Downey Unified School District.

Pemberton’s resume is extensive, but she says she is most proud of her daughters “and having strong ties to the community,



Phot by Jose Cervantes

and making a difference.”

“I don’t have a large family. Downey is my family,” she says. “Volunteering makes me happy. It seems when I am not around people I sometimes get a little melancholy. But after being with a group at an activity or just a meeting, you get to laugh, share and it fixes everything.”

“Volunteering is like medicine for the soul.”



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## Cafecito con Barney

By Barney Santos

Who: Joe Manacmul  
Cafecito: 1851 Brand Pour Over (black)

Social entrepreneur, community advocate, and all-around straight shooter, Joe can be seen trailblazing in the city of Downey through his amazing leadership as a co-founder of Stay Gallery.

Although a Downey-raised citizen, Joe is not originally from this area. In fact, Joe isn't originally from this country. He immigrated here as a young boy with his family and found his way to the great city of Downey where he is currently living, working, and helping elevate the community he loves.



Sitting with Joe over a cup of coffee you can quickly get a feel for the passion he has for the young people in his community.

"I really care about helping usher in the new generation of future leaders for this city," he says. "By empowering them it's more likely that they'll be able to pass along that leadership and love for their city to the generation behind them...In a sense what I'm really talking about is generational transformation."

Clearly you can see that Joe doesn't take this task lightly. He sold his shares of a lucrative small business and gave up his day job to help launch Downey Art Vibe, the non-profit behind Stay Gallery, back in 2011. Several years later, and after many sleepless nights, their small idea has transformed into a city-wide movement.

"The rubber has officially met the road" some would say when describing the momentum being gained by this group of great guys. In the short period of time that they've been pursuing this journey, they've managed to secure funding for a gallery space for five years, launched a slew of amazing artistic programs for the community, sparked a newfound interest in art in the city, acted as a catalyst in the development of the downtown area, and most recently have secured a contract with the city to roll out their branding initiative called Discover Downey.

When I asked Joe why he decided to do this work here instead of an already-established non-profit at someplace like LA, he simply said, "If you can't make a difference in your own town where else can you make a difference? Here I can immediately see the impact of my actions within the community and that's why I continue to work hard every day in this space."

"What can I say, I love this city, I love my community, and I love my team."

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## Lloyd Vernis knows all about sacrifice

By Eric Pierce



Growing up in the MacArthur Park neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles during the '80s and '90s, when gangsta rap was reaching unprecedented levels of popularity, there's a good chance Lloyd Vernis could have been swallowed by the gang culture that permeated the area at that time.

"That was sort of your destiny growing up there, to join a gang," Vernis, 28, remembers. "But my mom had a different vision."

His mother enrolled Vernis in University High School near Santa Monica. It was a daily 24-mile roundtrip commute, but the Westside campus afforded Vernis access to two things: a better education, and an opportunity to gain a glimpse of life beyond the concrete jungle he lived in.

The sacrifice paid off. Vernis kept his head straight and, five days before high school graduation in 2004, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines.

Only 17 at the time, Vernis, who grew up without a father, needed his mom's permission to process the paperwork.

"My mom has a really smooth signature, but that day I'd never seen my mom's hands so shaky," he laughed. "It was a culture shock. I went from high school to three years later in a combat environment."

Vernis spent eight years in the military, including deployments to Afghanistan and large swaths of southeast Asia. Along the way he discovered a talent that would prove useful later: an ability to cut hair.

Vernis was honorably discharged in 2012 but struggled to acclimate to civilian life. He dabbled with school and drove commercial trucks, but happiness was elusive. He also suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

It wasn't until he threw his back out that he realized he was at a critical juncture in his life.

"I was 26 and had to figure out what I wanted to do," he says. "I figured let me go for my passion."

That passion was cutting hair. In the service, Vernis' talent was relegated almost exclusively to buzz cuts, but at barber school he learned other techniques.

His friend, Nick Velez, is co-owner of Bastards, the downtown sports bar and grill. Velez recommended Vernis consider opening a barbershop in Downey, preferably downtown.

"My first question was, 'Where's Downey?'" Vernis laughs. "He was like, 'Just come down the 5 Freeway, get off on Lakewood and find a place.'"

Vernis settled on a location at 8317 Firestone Blvd., just around the corner from Bastards. It was formerly a mattress store.

The Pride Barbershop is now the second known veteran-owned business in Downtown Downey.

The barbershop itself resembles a man cave more than a commercial business. There is a regulation-size billiards table, five flat screen TVs and a PS3. The shop has a lions theme throughout.

"Lions are kings of the jungle," Vernis explains. "We're all kings, man. We're nothing less than that." The shop's slogan is "Where Kings Unite."

Original art pieces, provided by Stay Gallery, hang on a back wall.

This past Veterans Day, Vernis and his three employees donated their time by providing free haircuts to military veterans. Plans are in the works for additional events in support of veterans, schools and the community at large.

For Lloyd Vernis, his barbershop is more than just a place to get a haircut. It's a testament to the rewards of hard work, a solid plan and sacrifice.

He also has no more problems finding Downey on a map.

"I live here now," Vernis says with a smile. "It's my home."



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# FEBRUARY

■ The City Council greenlit a nearly \$57,000 branding initiative in an effort to develop a recognizable Downey image, establishing the city as a classic Americana town embracing its newfound multiculturalism.

Downey Art Vibe, which operates and manages the Stay Gallery, was chosen to spearhead the initiative, known as Discover Downey -- a scope of work that includes drafting advertising concepts, marketing strategies, media services, and a branding implementation plan.

"The 'look and feel' of a brand matters, especially that of a city's. It's the first impression that people will have when getting to know our city," said Valentin Flores, executive director of Downey Art Vibe. "The very essence of Discover Downey is to get people more involved in all things Downey, from discovering our local culture, our history, to all the opportunities our city has to offer."

Downey Art Vibe has already created a new city logo and launched discoverdowney.com, which now features a promo video of the city, highlighting some of its key landmarks.

■ The famous "Red Violin," a violin shrouded in mystery and more than 300 years old, was played to a sold out audience at the Downey Theatre by Elizabeth Pitcairn. The instrument was the subject of a major motion picture starring Samuel L. Jackson.

■ Board-certified cardiologist Dr. Jerry Floro was named a "Southern California Super Doctor" by Los Angeles magazine for a fifth consecutive year.

■ Brittany Batong, author of "Rally of a Purple Heart," appeared at the Downey City Library for a discussion and book signing.

■ "Inspiration," the city-owned space shuttle mockup, was relocated to a city maintenance yard in anticipation of construction at The Promenade shopping center. The mock-up was built in 1972 by Rockwell International and had been kept recently under a temporary tent outside the Columbia Memorial Space Center. Prior to that, it had been in storage at Downey Studios for decades.

■ The 45-piece orchestra MESTO (Multi-Ethnic Star Orchestra) announced it would make



Dash, a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois, joined the Downey Police Department as a police service dog. Dash patrols the streets of Downey with his handler, Cpl. Jason Klevos, and in his first week on duty, discovered 30 kilos of cocaine hidden inside a vehicle.

Downey its home base, with regular performances at the Downey Theatre.

■ Downey Fire Chief Lonnie Croom announced his retirement, effective Aug. 1. "During the last three decades, I have had the honor of serving the city of Downey alongside the most dedicated group of men and women who give their all every day to keep our community safe," Croom said. "From early on, I had decided that my retirement from the Downey Fire Department would come when I felt I had fulfilled my service to the community. I feel that time has come..."

■ Juan Ramon Cardoza, a 56-year-old Downey resident who taught at the Los Angeles Unified School District, received two years in prison for sexually abusing four students.

Continued to page 9



## KIWANIS Club of Downey

A YEAR IN REVIEW...

website:  
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### Community Project and Events

- Christmas at Las Casita's
- Hero Run
- ARC Walk
- BUG (Bring Up Your Grades)
- Rancho Los Amigos Pediatric Monthly Barbecue
- Rancho Los Amigos Annual Carnival
- Veterans Day Supply Drive
- Key Leader
- Young Child Priority One
- Scholarship Luncheon (Local HS)
- Kiwanis One Day
- Compton Initiative
- Pediatric Trauma Prevention

### Youth Sponsored Clubs

- Aktion Club (The ARC)
- Kiwan's (Downey HS)
- Key Club (Downey HS)
- Key Club (Lakewood HS)
- Kiwanis Green Team
- K Kids (Rio San Gabriel Elementary School)
- Builders Club (Wendy Doty Middle School)
- Builders Club (St. Raymond's Catholic School)
- Builders Club (Griffiths Middle School)
- Builders Club (Sussman Middle School)



**Thank you to all of our members that made this year possible. Kiwanis of Downey SALUTES YOU!**

- |                    |                      |                   |                  |                   |                    |                     |
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Every other Thursday at 12 pm  
at the Rio Hondo Event Center

Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to  changing the world one child and one community at a time.



Continued from page 8

- "Pyrograph" by Zachary Aronson, a unique exhibit featuring artwork burned onto wooden slats, opened at Stay Gallery.
- Downey High's boys basketball team won the league title, finishing with an overall record of 22-5.
- The Downey Police Department contracted with LexisNexis to make accident reports available online.
- Warren High junior Pedro Sanchez won first place in the Optimist Club of Downey's essay contest. His prize was \$1,000.
- Warren High senior Mariah Montero won first place in the Downey Lions Club's annual speech contest.
- Gary DeRemer was installed as president of the Downey Rose Float Association.
- Jason Barquero, 34, advanced to the finals of a competition to become the San Diego Padres' next PA voice. Although he didn't win, Barquero would become the public address announcer for the Los Angeles D-Fenders, the "minor league" affiliate of the Lakers.
- Downey resident Erick Solares was sworn in as president of the Mexican American Bar Association. Solares, who was born in Guatemala and serves as senior attorney with the California Department of Transportation's Legal Division, was sworn in by the Honorable David S. Wesley, the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.



Warren High's girls water polo team finished their league schedule undefeated to capture the San Gabriel Valley League championship.

# Kiwanis Club of Downey

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**STRATEGY WEALTH MANAGEMENT**

# MARCH



Maylin Gonzalez was crowned Miss Downey at the Downey Rose Float Association's 60th annual Miss Downey Pageant.

Her court includes Isis Gomez, Hazel Rodriguez, Julie Ledesma and Christina Ledezma.

Lunabe Oliver-Zamora, 15, was crowned Miss Teen Downey. Teen princesses include Mikayla Minnig, Giselle Garcia and Senovia Villatoro.

The title of Junior Miss Downey went to 11-year-old Alexa Troncoso. Her court includes McKenna Davila, Viany Campa and Alexa Munoz.

Ava Garcia, 8, was crowned Little Miss Downey. Little princesses include Camryn Witkin and Sarah Sarofeem.

■ Dr. Luis Montes, chair of pediatrics at Rancho Los Amigos Rehabilitation Center, received the hospital's Lifetime Achievement Award.

■ U.S. Paralympic athlete Katy Sullivan served as keynote speaker at Gangs Out of Downey's fundraising luncheon.

■ Aldo Schindler was hired as Downey's newest community development director, replacing Brian Saeki who left to become city manager in San Fernando. Schindler comes to Downey from Whittier, where he was named community development director in 2011. Prior to that, he worked in Bell Gardens and Long Beach.

■ Brookshire Park received a noticeable facelift, including a walking trail and new playground equipment. The \$100,000 renovation was funded by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps.

■ Warren High's boys soccer team was co-champion of the San Gabriel Valley League, sharing the title with Paramount.

■ Thousands attended the Arc Walk for Independence, raising money in support of services and programs for people with intellectual disabilities. Alysha Del Valle, traffic reporter for ABC-7, emceed the event

at Stonewood Center.

■ PIH Health Hospital – Downey opened for public tours, where it announced it was investing millions of dollars in upgrades, including an expansion of the emergency room. PIH, which acquired the hospital in 2013, said it was adding 14 exam rooms to the ER.

■ Downey High heavyweight wrestler Anthony Florido advanced to the state meet. Florido pinned his first three opponents but lost to two-time state champion Nick Nevills.

■ More than 600 college students descended on St. Pius X Academy – St. Matthias Academy to give the school a campus makeover. Volunteers pulled weeds, planted new landscaping, painted walls, created a mural, and assembled a green house.

■ Ana Godinez, a USC art major, was named curator at Stay Gallery. She also was tasked with running the gallery's youth programs.

■ "The Hyperpresent," a collection of paintings by artist David Layton, opened at Stay Gallery.

■ Downey band New American released its latest album at a release party hosted by Stay Gallery.

Continued to page 11

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A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Continued from page 10

■ Messiah Lutheran Church dedicated a new playground and garden completed in honor of Elaine Lopez, a Downey teacher and volunteer who died last year.



Downey police officers Michael Powell and Mark Caswell were honored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving for their proactive efforts in getting drunk drivers off Downey streets. Caswell arrested 65 suspected drunk drivers last year, while Powell arrested 51.

■ Angel Rodriguez, 23, earned a full scholarship to study medicine at Harvard University. Rodriguez completed his graduate studies at UC Santa Barbara – also on a scholarship.

■ Warren High janitor Carlos Baca was publicly recognized after finding a \$100 bill on campus and turning it over to administrators. Baca works at the school as part of The Arc – Los Angeles and Orange County’s employment program.

■ A Downey woman was convicted of robbing an East L.A. bank by strapping on a fake bomb and pretending to be a kidnapping victim. Aurora Barrera, 33, walked into the bank with what appeared to be an explosive device taped to her body and convinced a co-worker that she had been kidnapped that morning by two black men. She told the co-worker that they had to open the vault and place money outside the bank or else the kidnappers would harm them. Barrera escaped with \$565,500 of the bank’s money. She was sentenced to nine years in prison.

■ Documented gang member Wayne Cooper was gunned down outside a Bellflower Boulevard apartment complex. Cooper, 36, was sitting inside a parked vehicle at 1:32 a.m. when he was shot several times. Two suspects were arrested in connection with the shooting.

■ A two-alarm fire destroyed a strip of office buildings located at 10727 Paramount Blvd. Firefighters from Santa Fe Springs, Montebello, Vernon and L.A. County helped



Mexican Consul General Carlos M. Sada made a visit to Downey, where he met with Mayor Fernando Vasquez to discuss education, healthcare and bi-national economic development opportunities.

extinguish the blaze, which investigators said was intentionally set.

■ In a rare foray into politics, Downey police officers wrote a public letter urging a “no” vote on Measure B, the proposed charter amendment that would have eliminated the requirement that Downey staff its own police and fire departments. (The measure was overwhelmingly defeated.)

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## APRIL



Natalia Loya, a 13-year-old seventh grader at Doty Middle School, advanced to the finals of "La Voz Kids," a Spanish-language singing competition. Natalia is a former Jr. Miss Downey princess.

■ Spanish composer Oscar Navarro headlined a Downey Symphony performance at the Downey Theatre. Navarro is composer of the "Downey Overture," which had its world premiere in Downey three years ago and has been performed in London and other parts of the world.

■ Construction began on the Firestone Boulevard bridge that links Downey and Norwalk. Norwalk is the lead agency on the \$7.5 million project, which will feature three lanes in each direction when complete. Construction is estimated to continue through December 2015.

■ The sports fields at Rio San Gabriel Park re-opened after extensive renovations, including the addition of 250 tons of soil to prevent sinking. Work crews also raised five rotor heads and added 1,500 pounds

of perennial rye mix for athletic fields, along with 50 yards of seed topsoil. The park's basketball courts were upgraded as well.

■ "Nearly Naked," a photography exhibit by Rita Labib, opened at Stay Gallery.

■ The second annual Healthy Downey 5K Run/Walk took place at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

■ Chalk artists decorated the sidewalks of Downey Avenue in Downtown Downey, part of a fundraiser for child abuse prevention programs.

■ Doty Middle School's 31 advanced drama students performed "Knights of the Round Table" to a sold-out audience. The show was so popular, students put on a last-minute matinee encore performance two days later.

■ Downey residents Jose Hernandez and Jorge Del Toro were part of an 11-member delegation that participated in an educational and cultural exchange program in China.

■ Five vehicles were destroyed after a fire was intentionally set inside an apartment carport. One person was injured.

■ Irish artist Anne Rigney exhibited her work at Stay Gallery. Rigney's collections hang in public and private collections around the world.

■ City Hall debuted free public wi-fi, though users are limited to two free hours daily.

■ Downey's Diego Galvan traveled to Europe after he was chosen to represent a local soccer club overseas.

■ Speedskater Stacy Caprilli was ranked No. 3 in the nation after competing in Nationals in St. Louis. Caprilli was a senior at Downey High at the time.

■ Priscilla Flores was named Woman of the Year by Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia. Flores was born with muscular dystrophy and was told she would be confined to a bed by age 13 and likely dead by 20. Flores celebrated her 45th birthday March 13.

■ In Downey's annual state of the city address, Mayor Fernando Vasquez painted a picture of optimism, saying the city was on the right path financially and development projects on the horizon projected to further boost the local tax base.

■ In an effort to streamline basic care reporting performed by paramedics everyday, the Downey Fire Department launched an iPad-based system, replacing outdated paper forms with a digital interface that stores patient records electronically. Contracting with local company Digital EMS, Downey Fire purchased the nearly \$80,000 ePCR software jointly with the cities of Vernon, Compton, and Santa Fe Springs, splitting the costs to save money. For \$20,000, Downey Fire bought the interface, employee training, and 10 iPads, now deployed in every paramedic unit, fire engine, and truck company.

■ Criminal charges were filed against Jose Carbajal, a Downey man accused of stealing more than \$300,000 from elderly clients. Carbajal was arrested at a financial planning seminar in Downey where he was making a presentation before potential investors, prosecutors alleged.

■ The Downey Police Department opened its new use-of-force training center, where police officers can test and practice techniques, decision-making and judgment skills with the help of state-of-the-art technology. The center offers ongoing training for both non-lethal and lethal force options. Police officers previously had to travel outside the city for training.

■ Police officers worked as servers, waiters and waitresses at Johnny Carino's Italian restaurant, a fundraiser to benefit local Special Olympics athletes.

■ After eight seasons and two CIF titles, Rachel Godfrey stepped down as coach of Downey High's girls soccer team. She was replaced by Brandon Hitchcock, who would be arrested six months later for having an alleged sexual relationship with a player.

■ The city of Downey's ASPIRE after-school program finished first in the 6th Annual Teen Adventure Challenge held at the Hansen Dam in Los Angeles. Ninety-three teams from the surrounding Los Angeles area competed in a designed wilderness course that presents obstacles that are both physical and mental. Some of the challenges included kayaking, mountain biking, and rock wall climbing. Downey's ASPIRE team was comprised of students from Griffiths, Sussman and West middle schools to compete.

■ A team of Warren High School students won a Stock Market Analyst Competition at UCLA. Samantha Cano, a junior, was the team's captain.

## Healthy Downey - Year in Review

Healthy Downey was started in January 2013 by then-Mayor Mario Guerra to educate community members on the growing health risks associated with making poor nutritional choices and inactivity. Healthy Downey provides opportunities to the community on changing lives for the better.

To this day, the number of collaborative partners continues to grow as Healthy Downey continues to meet monthly. The partners discuss existing programs and share helpful resources amongst each other, where these resources become available to the Downey community.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Create a Healthier Downey

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Healthy Downey is community collaborative that focuses on health and nutrition, creating a sustainable approach to wellness that will positively impact current and future generations through forming partnerships with committed community stakeholders.

HD Community Partners: Coca-Cola, D.U.S.D./TLC, Kaiser Permanente, Family Health Care Centers of Greater LA, Downey Family YMCA, Downey Art Vibe, Apple Care Medical Group, LA County Department of Public Health, Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center, Chamber of Commerce, Downey Bicycle Coalition, Downey Police Department, Health Net, St. Francis Medical Center, Caremore Medical Group, New York Life, PIH Health, Strategy Wealth Management, LACOE, Premier Fitness, Downey Adult School, Human Services Association, Food Help, JWCH Wesley Health Center.

**HD sponsored/promoted events in 2014:**

**5K Run/Walk event for TLC** - April 5, coordinated event with TLC/D.U.S.D., hosted at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

**Bunny Breakfast** - April 12, participated event with Downey Los Amigos Kiwanis Club

**YMCA Kids Fun Day/Carnival of Champions** - April 26, participated event with Downey Family YMCA

**Kids Day** - May 10

**Twilight Summer Concerts**

**"The Beautiful Game" FIFA World Cup Experience** - July 13

**National Night Out** - August 5, participated event with Downey Police Department

**Golden Park Summer Music/Movie** - August 16

**International Food Festival** - September 20

**National Walk to School Day** - October 8, participated event with DUSD, Kaiser, YMCA, and the LA Department of Public Health

**Downey Dia de los Muertos Art Festival** - November 2

**Other city-wide community events:**

**Brookshire Park Grand Opening** - July 19

**Furman Park Grand Opening** - August 6

**Furman Park Walking Trail Dedication** - November 1

**Apollo Park Walking Trails Groundbreaking Event** - November 1

**PIH Health One Year Anniversary Event** - October 18 participated with PIH Health

**Guest speakers/presentations:**

March 11 - Ursula Ng (nutrition specialist - LA County Office of Education)

April 8 - Alexander Khananashvili (creator - Activate Hawaiian Gardens) and Mike Gomez (co-founder- Activate Hawaiian Gardens)

May 13 - Ellis White (head trainer/fitness coach - Premier Fitness)

June 10 - Levy Sun (public information officer - Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District)

July 8 - Brian Ballard (community liaison/diabetes outreach - CareMore)

August 12 - Keshia Kirtz (CHLA kids project coordinator - Human Services Association)

October 14 - Julie Spathopoulos (career and business instructor- Downey Adult School) and Cindy Grafton (administration - Downey Adult School)

November 10 - Sonya Meacham (recreation manager)

## Paging Dr. Frischer

By Dr. Alan Frischer



Dr. Alan Frischer received Mayor Fernando Vasquez's Healthy Heart Award in October, in recognition of his many contributions to the Downey community. Dr. Frischer is pictured with the mayor and family members.

The Dali Lama once said: *"I believe that the very purpose of our life is to seek happiness."*

On a recent vacation I took a swim with a friend. Abruptly, he stopped, turned toward me, and asked "What do you think is the purpose of life?" What a question to face during a nice casual swim! I took that issue home with me, and after much thought, I turned it around

and decided that I am happiest when my actions create meaning and fulfillment in the lives of others; when I experience a sense of purpose. Perhaps that is what led me to medicine. Is happiness ever an easy goal? Do you agree with the Dali Lama?

I believe that we are all on our own journey. As I observe my own life and those of my patients and loved ones, our journeys are filled with adventures, joy, discovery, heartache, pain, suffering, happiness, sadness, growth, and of course, love. I have yet to meet anyone on this planet who experiences nothing but happiness and joy. During life's easy times, we can coast along. It is during those difficult times that we dig deep and learn: about ourselves, and about how to handle life's challenges. It is perhaps in those difficult times that we also learn to find a sense of purpose and fulfillment that can lead to happiness.

The problem with our journey is that along the way, we have to learn how to cope. Wouldn't it be amazing if those coping skills were taught to us early on? We might already know how to meditate, exercise, sing, laugh, indulge in comfort food (in moderation!), or find other positive ways to cope when times get rough. Rather, what happens to so many of us is that we discover cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, overeating, emotional withdrawal, or other harmful mechanisms for handling stressful times. While I do appreciate a full waiting room, it is my goal every day to help my patients reconstruct their coping skills in positive and more effective directions.

The Dali Lama also said, *"When we meet real tragedy in life, we can react in two ways--either by losing hope and falling into self-destructive habits, or by using the challenge to find our inner strength."*

Let's fall into good habits, and find our own happiness during this coming year.

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## Without Vin Scully,

During an August game at Dodger Stadium between the Dodgers and the New York Mets, the Dodgers surpassed the three-million mark in attendance for the 18th time in the last 19 seasons and the 28th time since the franchise moved to Los Angeles from Brooklyn in 1958. And while Dodger fans still marvel at the incredible beauty of Blue Heaven on Earth as its 53rd season approaches, few Dodger fans are aware that construction of Dodger Stadium almost didn't happen; and even fewer are aware that beloved Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully actually played a key role in it happening at all.

Is this true? Did Vin Scully actually have this kind of clout even back in 1958?

The short answer is yes, but as you might imagine there is a lot more to this story.

Although many longtime Brooklyn Dodger fans still blame former Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley for moving their beloved Bums from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in 1958, the truth of the matter is that O'Malley, who was born and raised in Brooklyn, did everything that he possibly could to keep the team in the borough. Unfortunately, New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, who had tremendous power and say regarding land and construction projects in New York City, absolutely refused to allow O'Malley to build a new stadium in Brooklyn to replace the extremely outdated Ebbets Field – this in spite of the fact that O'Malley agreed to finance the new stadium entirely out of his own pocket.

Believing that O'Malley was bluffing about actually moving the Dodgers out of New York, Moses refused to back down and instead offered the Dodgers owner land near Flushing Meadow to build his new stadium – land on which Shea Stadium was eventually built and where Citi Field stands today; land that is in the borough of Queens not Brooklyn. (Somehow the Queens Dodgers or even worse, the Flushing Dodgers, doesn't have a very good ring to it).

But O'Malley was not bluffing – it was either Brooklyn or move the team to Los Angeles, where city officials had been courting the Dodgers owner since 1956 and were more than willing to work with him on acquiring land for a new stadium. Thus, it was Robert Moses who forced O'Malley's hand and on September 24, 1957 the Dodgers played their final game at Ebbets Field.

The move to Los Angeles wasn't without its problems for O'Malley; in fact, there were huge problems. While L.A. City officials welcomed O'Malley and his Dodgers with open arms, many others did not – most notably a man named John Smith who owned the San Diego Padres, a

Continued to page 15

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# there might not have been a Dodger Stadium

Continued from page 14

By Ron Cervenka

Triple-A team in the Pacific Coast League. It was Smith's contention that allowing the Dodgers to build their own stadium in Los Angeles would be an economic threat to his minor league franchise – a franchise that would one day itself become a major league expansion team. To compound matters, resistance to O'Malley's plan to build a new stadium near downtown Los Angeles was intense because the land on which the city had approved for the proposed construction of Dodger Stadium, Chavez Ravine, was home to hundreds of squatters who would be forced to leave their shanty homes. As a result, opponents of the new stadium forced the matter to be put before L.A. voters in a referendum titled Proposition B.

Although it wasn't discovered until after the election, the driving force lobbying against Proposition B was none other than John Smith. So how does Vin Scully play into all of this?

This excerpt from Neil J. Sullivan's outstanding 1989 book "The Dodgers Move West" pretty much sums it up:

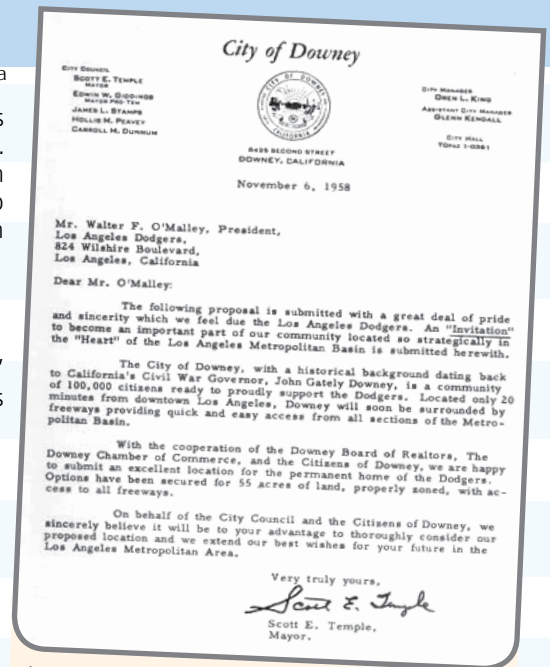
"Perhaps the most formidable asset which Walter O'Malley might have brought to bear in support of Proposition B was the Dodgers' announcer, Vin Scully. Scully was immediately popular in Los Angeles, and with the team doing so poorly [in 1958] he became the focus



for much of the enthusiasm about the team. He was the only member of the Dodgers having a good year. Scully relates that Walter O'Malley never discussed the political contest with him, nor suggested that Scully try to sway voters during his broadcasts. Such an attempt might have been received as a crude measure and triggered a backlash, but the tactic was apparently never even considered. Scully also reports that he personally felt no responsibility for the outcome of the referendum. He maintains he didn't consider the seriousness of Proposition B until after the election was over. Up to that point, he was as unaware as Walter O'Malley about the exercise in direct democracy, and only later realized how fragile a hold the Dodgers had on Los Angeles. The announcer's innocence served the Dodgers very well."

In the largest turnout for a non-presidential election (62.3%), Los Angeles voters passed Proposition B by the slimmest of margins – 351,683 in favor to 325,898 opposed, a difference of only 25,785 votes. Had the ballot measure failed, the Dodgers, in all likelihood, would have moved elsewhere – quite possibly Minneapolis, which was lobbying hard for an MLB

The Brooklyn Dodgers played their final game at Ebbets Field on Tuesday, September 24, 1957 in front of 6,702 fans beating the Pittsburgh Pirates 2-0.



In 1958, Downey mayor Scott Temple sent a letter to Walter O'Malley, pitching Downey as a possible home for Dodger Stadium.

team and eventually landing the Washington Senators and renaming them the Twins. (I can't even imagine). Did Vin Scully's love affair with Dodgers fans, even brand new L.A. Dodger fans have a direct impact on the final outcome of Proposition B? I'll let you be the judge of that.

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*Happy Holidays!*

Thank you, Downey, for the honor and privilege of allowing me to serve as your mayor. Together we achieved many wonderful things in 2014, and I'm confident 2015 will be even better.

*Fernando Vasquez*  
Mayor of Downey

# MAY

■ Measure B, the controversial initiative that would have deleted a city requirement that Downey provide its own police and fire services, was overwhelmingly rejected by Downey voters. The ballot measure lost by more than 4600 votes as 82.9 percent of voters rejected the initiative supported by the Downey Firemen's Association. "We sent the message tonight that we're united and we cannot be tricked by special interests," said Councilman Alex Saab, one of the spearheads of the "No on Measure B" campaign, along with realtor Lourdes Cotaya and planning commissioner Robert Kiefer. "We're proud of our police and fire departments -- we've got the best around. They're not going anywhere, they're here to stay."

■ Fred Haise, an Apollo 13 astronaut and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, toured the Columbia Memorial Space Center and served as keynote speaker at a Downey Association of Realtors luncheon.

■ Downey High students performed Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," but in a twist, the production was set in the 1950's.

■ Efrain Espinoza Gonzalez pleaded guilty in federal court to filing a false income tax return. Gonzalez, 65, owned three auto repair and parts businesses but prosecutors alleged he understated his income by approximately \$750,000.

■ A looming traffic nightmare on Florence Avenue was pushed back yet again. Florence, near the 5 and 605 interchange in northeast Downey, will be reduced to one lane in March 2015, according to Caltrans' latest timeline.

■ Mayor Fernando Vasquez appointed Javier Lizarde the unofficial mayor of downtown Downey.

■ Tiffany Ashton, Monica Calvert, Krisstel Gomez-Maisterra, Liliana Hernandez, Mariah Montero, Camila Reyes-Martinez, Alexandria Vingino and Melanie Weyers were honored at the Iridescent Ball for their volunteerism as members of the Assisteens.

■ After receiving dozens of letters from residents complaining about loud noise, increased crime, and declining property values, the Planning Commission denied an application from the Wet Bar to host live entertainment, including mariachis, DJs and karaoke. The Wet Bar, located on the



Warren High's girls swim team won the 2014 San Gabriel Valley League championship and 10 individual titles. "It was a record-breaking, record-breaking afternoon at Downey High School," said Coach Josie Cordero.

southwest corner of Lakewood Boulevard and Imperial Highway, originally received an operating permit in 2012 to operate as a casual bar and lounge. But the bar expanded and earlier this year began hosting live bands, which violated its permit. On a 3-2 vote, planning commissioners agreed that live entertainment was a bad idea at the Wet Bar, at least right now.

■ More than 200 of Warren High School's top students were presented with Golden Bears at the school's 25th anniversary celebration program. Alejandra (Mulan) MacDougall was presented the Grand Golden Bear Award, which goes to the most outstanding student of the night. Alejandra

Continued to page 18

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Continued from page 16

graduated from Warren the following month and started classes at Stanford University in the fall.

■ Warren High School students won two gold medals and six silver medals at the SkillsUSA competition in San Diego. The team of Sam Kim and Dan Tejada won gold in Mobile Robotics, beating out Paso Robles, Modesto and Corona. Thomas Ascanio brought home a gold in Culinary Arts, the first time Warren High had won a gold medal in that category.

■ Old River School Elementary captured first place at the 50th annual Carnival of Champions track and field competition. Approximately 500 boys and girls competed in events such as baskets in one minute, softball throw for distance, standing long jump, 50-meter dash, 100-meter dash, four-member 400-meter relay, and a mixed coed relay.

Old River finished with 189 points, good enough for first place. They were followed in the standings by Rio San Gabriel, Gallatin, Lewis, Price, Carpenter, Gauldin, Rio Hondo and Unsworth.

■ Mark Gillaspie was named Downey's newest fire chief, replacing Lonnie Croom who announced his retirement one month prior. Gillaspie, who had served as assistant fire chief since 2011, officially took over in August.

■ The Downey Kiwanis Foundation donated \$80,000 to the Kiwanis International Foundation in support of the Eliminate Project, a global effort to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus.

■ After public backlash, the Downey City Council this week agreed to scale back a proposed "Wall

## JUNE

■ June 14 was a busy day in Downey, as the city hosted its first Tour de Downey (a 60-mile bicycle ride) followed by Make Music Downey, an all-day music festival. Both events attracted thousands of people to Downey.

■ Former WBO lightweight champion Ebo Elder was a guest at Desert Reign Church, where he spoke about his rise to success and fall to despair.

■ Downey Adult School began offering a take-home English as a Second Language class.

■ The Second Tyme Around thrift shop in Downtown Downey re-opened after renovations. The store is owned and operated by the Assistance League of Downey.

■ Retired soccer stars Cobi Jones and Mauricio Cienfuegos made an appearance at Macy's, though an autograph required a purchase of at least \$75.

■ Seven high school students – four from Downey, three from Warren – traveled to Kansas City after qualifying for the SkillsUSA State Championships, where they competed in various competitions testing their leadership and occupational skills.

■ The Downey Unified School District was named a model district by the state of California after reducing its expulsion rate 90 percent since 2003. "Keeping kids in school and learning is at the heart of these efforts," said Tom Torlakson, state superintendent of public instruction. "In California, we have a group of exceptional [programs] leading the way with strategies that help districts reduce chronic absenteeism and dropping out."

■ Warren High School's robotics team brought home a first place trophy from the 2014 MWD Solar Cup competition held at Lake Skinner. More than 800 students from 40 high schools throughout Southern California competed in the four-day event. The Bears team won first place for their public service message, which was the highest rated public service video with a perfect score of 250 points.

■ After a three-year hiatus, middle school sports returned to Downey.

■ Rock band Dream Alive performed at the Stardust Club, where they debuted their new album, "Before the Dawn."

■ Best-selling authors Shaun Morey and Tyler Dilts headlined an authors' event at the Rio Hondo Event Center, sponsored by the Friends of the Downey City Library. Morey achieved success with his "Incredible Fishing Stories Series" as well as his novel, "Wahoo Rhapsody," an international mystery and drug caper. Dilts taught English at Cal State Long Beach and is the author of a series of fictional novels set in and around Long Beach. One of his books, "A King of Infinite Space," centers around a crime scene that occurred at Warren High School.

■ Praise Chapel Downey rented out the Krikorian Theatre on June 29 to celebrate its seven-year anniversary. The service include special guests from local non-profits and live musical performances.

■ The Downey Patriot took home four awards at the L.A. Press Club's annual awards banquet.

Staff writer Christian Brown won third place in the News Feature category for his story "Vulnerable Homeless Residents Discovered in Downey," which chronicled an effort to count Downey's homeless population.

Brown won another third place award for his investigative piece titled "PIH Acquisition of Downey Regional Raises Eyebrows in Health Community."

of Fame" outside City Hall that would have cost up to \$70,000. The project could still happen but likely at a lower cost.

■ Mayor Fernando Vasquez delivered a commencement address at San Diego State University, his alma mater.

■ Downey hosted two Memorial Day ceremonies, including a wreath-laying ceremony at the Downey Cemetery.

■ Nancy Hooker, William Holmes and Marci Vasquez were named Teachers of the Year by the Downey United Masonic Lodge.

■ Downey High's boys swim team won its third consecutive league title after finishing its regular season a perfect 11-0.

■ With a shutout win over Dominguez, Downey High's baseball team secured the league title.

■ Warren High's boys volleyball team finished 10-0 in league play to capture the league championship.

■ Warren High's boys track team defeated cross-town rival Downey, a victory made even sweeter because it gave the Bears the league championship.

■ Warren and Gahr high schools shared the San Gabriel Valley League championship in softball.



Downey High graduate Ada Hernandez received special recognition at commencement ceremonies for having perfect attendance since sixth grade. Hernandez is now studying criminal justice at Rio Hondo College and hopes to become a Downey police officer.

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Continued from page 18

The article reported that Downey Regional Medical Center management "evidently dismissed more than one eligible acquisition offer from credible health care entities without proper due diligence in order to advance negotiations with PIH Health."

Graphic designers Cristina Gonzalez and Jonathan Fox won third place in the Design category for their work on "Downey 2013: A Year to Remember," an end-of-the-year magazine published by the Patriot.

Editor Eric Pierce won second place for his profile on Downey boxer Christopher Picos as he prepared for his first professional fight.

■ Elizabeth Trombley, public affairs director for Kaiser Permanente, was sworn in as the 111th president of the Downey Chamber of Commerce. In addition to Trombley and outgoing president Patricia Kotze-Ramos, the chamber's 2014-15 officers included president-elect Cindy Kovach, vice president David Gafin, and treasurer Dee Bacus.

■ More than 2,000 DUSD students received their diplomas during commencement ceremonies.

On June 18, over 1,000 Downey High students received their diplomas to boisterous applause at the Cerritos College stadium. An estimated 12,000 people attended the ceremonies.

Downey High seniors were accepted by an assortment of colleges and universities, including Stanford, NYU, Cornell, Harvard, UCLA and USC.

An estimated 10,500 supporters filled the Cerritos College stadium the following night for Warren High's commencement ceremony, where 865 seniors received diplomas.

Warren High students were accepted to UC Davis, USC, Cal State Fullerton and Cal State Los Angeles, among other schools.

Columbus High School held its graduation ceremony earlier in the week, with 198 students walking across the stage to accept their diplomas.



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Alexander Thomas Foskarino, a Downey native, credited his hometown after graduating cum laude from Norwich Senior Military University in Northfield, Vt. in June.


Foskarino, a computer security and assurance major, was commissioned after his graduation.

"It was from the teachings of unsung Downey individuals that kept me going," Foskarino said. "I encourage the youth in Downey to stop, listen and learn from the experience Downey has available to them."

"For example, the words of Warren's outstanding track coach, Ramon Miranda, would not allow me to slow down before aggressively striding for the finish line. The pride in being worthy of my deployed Marine friends John Min Oh, Bill Winans, Spencer Edmonds, Sean O'Neal and Miguel Dennis drove me on. The fundamentals taught by Warren's fine teachers Kevin Hobbensiefken, Jon Westerman, Rob English and Bill Austin supported my pursuit of a computer security degree.

"Finally, the spiritual sermons from Downey Calvary Chapel Pastor Jeff Johnson and the love of my dotting mother (Rose Foskarino) and grandmothers (Ela Foskarino and Rosa Medina) created the driving force that made it all happen. "If high school students are looking for a military and academic challenge, I encourage them to look at the three U.S. military academies and six senior military universities; lean on experienced leaders that Downey has to offer, and when done, understand that the adventure has only begun."

**FERNANDO VASQUEZ**  
Mayor




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West Middle School science teacher Tri Tansopalucks returned from space camp at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. With a team of 17 other educators, Tansopalucks, who teaches sixth, seventh, and eighth grade at West, underwent 45 hours of classroom lessons, lab assignments and hands-on training from both crew workers and NASA personnel. "Everything in space is just cooler," said Tansopalucks, 39. "We learned about gravity and how the space shuttle enters the earth's atmosphere at 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit. We even used astronaut apparatus. It wasn't like Disneyland...they have Tomorrowland, but the rockets aren't real. This was the real deal."


**ALEX SAAB**  
Mayor Pro Tem



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## CONSERVE WATER, IT'S THE LAW

### TIPS ON HOW TO SAVE WATER AND SAVE MONEY



#### CITY MANDATED WATER USE RESTRICTIONS

**Background** – In response to the drought, the State adopted Emergency Regulations effective July 28, 2014 requiring all water providers and users to conserve water making non-compliance punishable by a fine of up to \$500 per day.



The City urges water users to put into action the City's Water Use Restrictions, summarized below, to ensure compliance with the State's mandates.

#### **Landscape Irrigation**

- ◆ Potable water irrigation limited to 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. on designated days; exceptions made for golf courses, parks, schools, fields, nurseries, and landscape contractors
- ◆ Recycled water irrigation permitted on any day
- ◆ Watering permitted any time if hand-held hose equipped with shut-off nozzle, 5 gallon or less bucket, or drip irrigation is used
- ◆ Properties with even/odd addresses limited to irrigating on even/odd days of the month; if unfeasible, irrigating permitted Mon/Wed/Fri.



- ◆ No irrigation runoff from landscaped areas onto hardscape from incorrectly directed or maintained sprinklers or excessive watering

#### **Exterior Washing**

- ◆ No washing of buildings, facilities, equipment, autos, trucks, trailers, boats, airplanes, and other mobile equipment except with a hose with shut-off nozzle for quick rinses
- ◆ Washing permitted any time on the immediate premises of a commercial car wash

- ◆ Washings exempted where health, safety, and welfare of public is contingent upon vehicle or other facility/equipment cleaning
- ◆ No wash down of sidewalks, driveways, parking areas, patios, or paved areas except to alleviate fire, sanitation, or health hazards



#### **Ornamental/Recreational**

- ◆ Filling/refilling of pool/spas is discouraged and only allowed 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- ◆ Filling/refilling of ponds, fountains, and lakes is discouraged and recycling encouraged

#### **Other/Leaks**

- ◆ No serving of water at restaurants unless requested
- ◆ Leaks to be repaired as soon as discovered and not allowed to continue more than 48 hrs

#### WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

**Landscape Irrigation** – Outdoor landscaping can consume 50% or more of water used at a property. Focus on reducing evaporation, eliminating runoff, and only watering as much as needed.

- ◆ Water your lawn and garden in the early morning or late evening to reduce water lost to evaporation and exposure to wind
- ◆ Reduce the days and length of time that you water your landscaping; Most landscaping only needs watering 2-3 days per week and 6-7 minutes per cycle; Possibly less during winter
- ◆ Use drip irrigation where possible and consider drought resistant native landscaping



- Best time to plant natives is in the fall/winter
- Use organic mulch around trees and plants to reduce water evaporation and discourage weed growth
- Install a smart irrigation controller that adjusts watering based on weather, soil type, amount of shade, and type of landscaping
- If using a standard controller, install a rain sensor or turn off sprinklers when it rains
- Maximize the amount of water delivered to your landscaping by checking your irrigation system to prevent overspray, replace broken sprinkler heads, and repair leaks routinely



- Rotating sprinkler nozzles can result in 20% less water use than conventional spray heads
- Plant with finished compost to add nutrients and water holding organic matter to soil

**Pools, Spas, and Ponds** – Due to the automatic fill devices on many pools, spas, and ponds, leaks can go undetected resulting in significant water waste.

- Check pools, spas, and ponds for leaks
- Turn off the automatic fill device, place a weighted bucket filled with water to the same level as the pool/pond on a step, and determine if the water level in the pool/pond is dropping faster which would indicate a leak.



- Alternatively, use a grease pencil to mark the pool water level at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later to see if you have a leak

**Sidewalks, Driveways, Parking, Patios** - Using water to wash down hardscape or paved areas of any kind is prohibited.

- Use a broom, not a hose, to clean sidewalks, driveways, and patios; Use a broom or commercial sweeper for parking areas.

**Indoor Water Use** – Indoor water use is determined by the appliances we use, our water use habits, and upkeep of plumbing. Know what is happening and where you can save by performing a quick survey of your property.

#### **Toilets, Showerheads, Faucets**

- Check your toilet for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. After 30 minutes (without flushing) check to see if any color shows up in the bowl. Invisible leaks can waste 100 gallons of water a day.
- Use high-efficiency (1.28 gallons per flush or less) toilets, water saving shower heads, and low-flow (1.8 gallons per minute or less) faucet aerators



- Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving, and avoid long showers
- Check faucets for leaks; even a slow drip can waste 15-20 gallons per day
- Consider waterless urinals for your business

#### **Clothes Washers and Dishwashers**

- Only run full loads in your dishwasher and washing machine. Half-full loads waste water and money.
- Use Energy Star clothes washers which use 35-50% less water and energy per load
- Use water saving front-load clothes washers
- Avoid "permanent press" cycles which can use an extra 5 gallons for extra rinse

#### **Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling**

- Use your water meter to check for leaks. With all water use turned off, check your meter reading. Check the meter again in 30 minutes. If the reading has changed, you have a leak.
- Close the main shut off valve and run the same test to determine whether the leak is between the meter and shut off valve or downstream of the shut off valve.
- Look for unusual wet spots on ceilings, floors, and in the yard indicating a leak
- An instant water heater near the kitchen sink will eliminate having to wait for the water to heat up saving time and water
- Set HVAC systems and water softeners for a minimum number of refills to save water

**Want More Information?** - Call the Public Works Utilities Division @ 562-904-7202 or visit [www.downeyca.org](http://www.downeyca.org) for water saving rebates & tips

# JULY

- Oldies group The Smokin' Cobras opened Downey concerts in the park series.
- Despite threats of heavy fines, illegal fireworks exploded all over Downey on July 4.
- Larry Paul Trujillo, 34, was sentenced to life in prison for fatally shooting a Mexican actor inside his Downey home in 2010. Trujillo fatally shot 53-year-old Hermilio Franco in the chest on Nov. 3, 2010 during a botched home invasion robbery. Franco, an actor who appeared in various Mexican films, grabbed his gun and returned fired at Trujillo, striking him in the neck. Trujillo was left paralyzed.
- ABC-7 meteorologist Bri Winkler was keynote speaker at a sold out stroke seminar at the Rio Hondo Event Center.
- Downey 10-year-old Alex Sarmiento caught the first pitch at a Dodgers game.
- Florence Towers was installed as president of the Assistance League of Downey.
- The Downey City Council hired a consultant to guide the formation of a business improvement district in Downtown Downey, which would help fund special events and additional services such as street sweeping and security. "With the rapid growth of Downtown Downey, staff has found an increase in the demand for certain services in the area, including street sweeping, steam cleaning, security, public art, etc.," said community development director Aldo Schindler. "While

- the city currently provides regular general services to the downtown area, it is essential that alternative sources be studied to provide continued funding for special services the downtown requires to maintain its vitality."
- The Embassy Suites was named Large Business of the Year by the Downey Chamber of Commerce. Gallatin Dental Group earned Small Business of the Year honors.
- On a 3-2 vote, the Planning Commission granted preliminary approval to a request by Club DB Lounge to hire go-go dancers. Before the vote could be ratified the following month, however, the nightclub owner withdrew the request after a wave of complaints from residents.
- Downey resident Elizabeth Kravig graduated from the California Highway Patrol's training academy. She is assigned to the Central Los Angeles area office.
- City officials announced that Furman and Apollo parks would each receive new walking trails. The tracks are worth a combined \$600,000 and are being paid with state grants.
- More than 150 judges, prosecutors, public defenders, private attorneys, and supporters participated in the Mexican American Bar Association's inaugural golf tournament at the Rio Hondo Golf Club. "Ricardo [Perez] and I live here. This is our home. We know how beautiful the city of Downey is and it was important for us to have the tournament here," said MABA president Erick Solares.

- Charlene Shimada was promoted to principal of Alameda Elementary, while Lynn Eborra was named principal at Rio San Gabriel Elementary.
- Jose Felix, A "spiritual healer" convicted of raping a woman inside his makeshift Downey office was sentenced to nine years in prison. Prosecutors said Felix advertised in Spanish newspapers that he was a "spiritual healer" who could solve love issues for women. On Jan. 15, 2013, a woman visited Felix at his Downey office and was sexually assaulted, authorities said.
- The L.A. County Board of Supervisors approved six large-scale renovation projects at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. Upgrades include an accessible gymnasium and aquatic therapy center, seismic retrofitting, a new outpatient facility, and renovations to the support services annex and Harriman building. "Rancho Los Amigos is consistently named one of the country's best rehabilitation centers and with these upgrades it will have the means and infrastructure needed to continue performing miracles," said Supervisor Don Knabe.
- Downey Adult School's VN program was named the most "Hispanic-friendly" nursing program in Los Angeles County by the Practical Nursing Organization.
- Downey Chamber of Commerce executive director Carlos Cruz resigned after accusations of sexual harassment from a Downey business owner.



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## My Great-grandfather Dode

By Elaine Held

*Editor's note: the following story was written by Elaine Held as part of a writing class at the Norwalk Senior Center, offered through the Cerritos College Adult Education Program. Bonnie Mansell is the instructor and Carol Kearns curates the stories.*

Dode, whose real name was Jerry Mock, was my great-grandfather and a character. He chewed tobacco, wore suspenders and swore. I never knew anybody like Dode.

My mother and her sister Beverly lived with Dode and Grandma after their mother died. Dode taught my mother how to box as he felt the town of Farmer, South Dakota, was too rough and she needed to know how to take care of herself. He had no way of knowing what that would lead to.

My mother and Beverly went to the Farmer dances. The dances were held in a round topped metal building. They were usually wild affairs with a lot of drinking. My mother told of a woman so drunk that she urinated in her shoe.

One night when it got particularly bad, Mother and Beverly decided to go home. Bev led the way and Mother hurried to catch up. When Mother came around the corner Ernie Yost had Bev down on the ground astraddle her. Mother came up behind him and started hitting him. Bev was scratching his face and kicking him. He managed to get away from them, but with a broken nose and deep scratches. When asked what had happened, he just said, "Stay away from Shirley Tugel."

Dode was the train depot agent. That meant he had to know Morse code to transmit and receive messages. He was in charge of the mail and passengers. He taught Grandmother and Mother Morse code so they could help him.

One day after school Mother was at the depot and she was

going to receive the mail. There was an arm that swung out over the edge of the platform to catch the mail that was in a bag hanging out from the train as it passed by. Mother had to be right on the edge of the platform to do this job. As she was standing there the town drunk thought it would be cute to push her. Mother whirled and let him have it in the nose and broke her second nose. The boxing lessons were coming in handy.

One winter after a huge snow drop Dode was working at the train station and he heard the snow plow coming. The snow was about twelve feet deep on the road by the platform. A tremendous cracking snapping sound scared Dode and he dropped under his desk. It saved his life. The man running the snow plow had misjudged where the platform was under the snow and drove the blade into it. Planks flew every direction killing a man who was walking by.

Dode drove an old car, but Grandma told him where to turn and what to do. One day they were going to Mitchell and Grandma had asked one of her friends to come along. This particular friend was quite heavy. When she got into the car she dropped into the seat. Dode shouted, "What damn fool hit me now!" Grandma had false teeth that didn't fit and when she was upset they rattled. This was one time her teeth did a double-dutch rattle.

Dode chewed tobacco. He didn't care where he spit. If he had to spit, he spit. When he was driving he didn't spit out the window because it would go in the back seat of the car so he stuck his head under the steering wheel and spit. That meant he wasn't seeing where he was going. He found himself in the ditch often.

Grandma and Dode had a little dog called Mike. Mike went



everywhere with Dode. Dode always said he picked Mike out because he was the same color as his tobacco. That way if he spit and hit Mike, you couldn't tell.

Dode's mother was the sister to Nancy Hanks, Abe Lincoln's mother. Dode never talked about it, but I could always get Grandmother to talk about Dode's family and hers. She said you couldn't trace back from Abe Lincoln because his grandmother was a prostitute. It is alleged that Abe alluded to that many times, and when my husband and I went to the Lincoln museum in Indiana, we were told the same thing.

No matter who Dode was related to, I am glad he was mine. I learned self-reliance and pride from him. I loved that he was different and a character. I am a better person for having him in my life.

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*Our heartfelt gratitude to our community and our city staff for all your support and love as we served together since 2006. Thank you to my colleagues' for your leadership and friendship this past eight years. May God continue to bless us all. Council member Mario & Ann Guerra, Matt, Lynne, Haley, Ryan & Mario II... Faith, Family & Friends*

# AUGUST

■ Downey joined in National Night Out celebrations being held across the country. Downey's event included demonstrations by the police department's canine unit, vendor booths, crime prevention workshops, free barbecue, and more.

■ A new playground opened at Furman Park. The \$300,000 project was funded by the Downey Kiwanis Foundation.

■ Artist Victor Koast debuted a new exhibit of paintings at Stay Gallery.

■ Downey Police arrested former city council candidate Gabriel Orozco twice in one day after he allegedly assaulted his mother.

■ After losing out on a multi-million dollar contract with Los Angeles County, Raytheon closed its Public Safety Regional Technology Center in Downey. Approximately 150 people worked at the facility, located at Woodruff Avenue and Stewart & Gray Road.

■ On a 5-0 vote, the City Council agreed to continue subsidizing Stay Gallery by paying its \$2,000 monthly rent for the next three years. "We're not economically sustainable, yet we've never been stronger," said gallery executive director Valentin Flores. "If we're back in three years (asking for additional funding), I think there is a glitch in our operations."

■ Sixty-one mosquitoes and five dead birds tested positive for West Nile virus, prompting public health officials to warn Downey residents to take precaution.

■ Imposters masquerading as Southern California Edison

workers began targeting Downey residents through a series of phone calls, trying to collect on phony past due electricity bills.

■ The Columbia Memorial Space Center announced a partnership with Google for a digital exhibit, allowing people around the world to pay the space center a virtual visit.

■ Jabari Ruffin, a USC linebacker and 2012 Downey High graduate, tore a knee ligament, ending his college football season.

■ A row of pine trees were removed from the 9500 block of Muller Street, drawing mixed reactions from residents.

■ The Downey fire union filed a lawsuit against the city of Downey citing allegations of harassment, retaliation, and breach of contract since members voted no confidence in former Fire Chief Lonnie Croom in 2013.

Continued to page 25

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A YEAR TO REMEMBER

Continued from page 24

In the 25-page deposition, the fire union and 14 individual members accused Councilman Mario Guerra of using city funds for campaign expenses and alleged Croom retracted his support for county fire services in order to secure a 5.5 percent pay raise in 2013.

The lawsuit also alleged Croom withheld promotions, initiated unwarranted disciplinary actions, and threatened to stall pay increases as a result of union activities.

"This is another attempt to mislead and deceive Downey residents in what has become an abuse of the legal system," responded Guerra. "I was appalled to read the false statements against me and the attempt to slander my name and character. I look forward to Downey moving past this distraction and continuing on with our positive growth."



The Downey Police Department further expanded its canine program with the addition of a new canine handler, Cpl. Ed Hano, and his police service dog, Dani. Dani is a 3-year-old female Dutch Shepherd specifically trained in suspect apprehension.



Dr. Mary Stauffer, a longtime philanthropist and champion of education in Downey, had West Middle School re-named in her honor. Mary R. Stauffer Middle School was dedicated at a public ceremony attended by nearly 300 people. "I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for this honor," Dr. Stauffer said. "This has been a wonderful day for me, and I predict it will be a wonderful future for Stauffer Middle School."

Continued to page 26

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# SEPTEMBER

Continued from page 25

■ Downey High unveiled its newly-built engineering building, a 19,500 sq. ft. facility boasting eight work bays, four labs and a classroom.

■ A press conference was held to announce Downey as a host city for the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, taking place next summer in Los Angeles. As a host city, Downey will provide food and housing for 100 Special Olympics athletes for three days.

■ One year after becoming a co-ed high school, St. Pius X – St. Matthias Academy announced it was forced to establish a waitlist after receiving a record number of applications for the 2014-2015 school year. Two-hundred applications were received and 191 students were accepted for the new school year.

■ A 14-year-old female band member at Downey High said she was subjected to hazing as part of an initiation to join the music program. The girl told KTLA News that she and other freshmen were made to twerk while seniors squirted them with whipped cream. There were also allegations that freshmen were tied up, had bags placed over their heads, and had feminine pads thrown at them. DUSD officials promised an investigation.

- Dunkin' Donuts opened in Downey, becoming the first West Coast location with a drive-thru.
- Chick-fil-A opened to much fanfare, creating 60 new jobs.
- Downey United Methodist Church marked its 160th anniversary.
- Now in its 10th year, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church hosted its Blue Mass for Downey police officers and firefighters.
- Blue Star Family Day, a military-themed festival, was held at Downey High.
- "Newsweek" and the Daily Beast included Warren High on its breakout list of one of the "Most Transformative High Schools in the Country." The list highlights high schools that best prepare students for postsecondary education.
- The Downey Symphony held its annual Garden Party, which featured a Mad Hatter theme.
- Jackie and Donald Ellingson were honored by the City Council as Downey's Parents of the Year.
- Under the leadership of new coach Raul Lara, Warren High's football team beat Firebaugh High, 20-6, to snap a 26-game losing streak. It was the Bears' first win since 2011.
- Pastor Daphne Gascot Arias took over as minister at Downey Memorial Christian Church.
- Rev. Christie Melby-Gibbons announced she was leaving the Moravian Church of Downey after accepting a call to provincial service.
- Live bands, dancers and, of course, food marked Downey's International Food Festival, held in Downtown Downey.



Bob and Joanne Earl, Joe and Dianne Lumsdaine, and Steve and Darlene Roberson were honored by the Downey YMCA for their decades of community service.

■ Downey resident Rick Rodriguez was recognized as a "Hometown Hero" by the American Red Cross. As the owner of a security firm, Rodriguez has hired nearly 200 veterans (67% of his total workforce is comprised of U.S. vets).

■ The campaign between state senate candidates Mario Guerra and Tony Mendoza turned ugly when an anonymous website attacked Guerra, calling him "corrupt" and a "big-spender millionaire [who] refuses to stop misappropriating and misusing public funds."

■ Lydia Rosales, a resident at the Brookfield Healthcare Center nursing home in Downey, had only one wish on her 78th birthday yesterday: to dance with the mayor of Downey. Mayor Fernando Vasquez was happy to oblige.

# Rotary Club of Downey

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The mission of Rotary International is to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through its fellowship of business professionals, and community leaders. The Rotary Club of Downey does this through a variety of community and internationally based service projects. We meet weekly for fellowship.

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## Methodist church steeped in Downey's history

By Richard Daggett

Throughout 2014, Downey United Methodist Church celebrated 160 years of service to the Downey area.

As we look to the future we can also reflect on our involvement in the spiritual, educational and cultural development of our community during our first 160 years.

The first wave of immigrants to California had passed — those who were seeking the gold fields of the Sierra Nevada foothills. Now a second wave had begun. Their treasure was of a different kind — the fertile soil of California. They wanted a place to build homes, plant crops and raise their families. The Los Nietos valley was such a place.

Situated southeast of Los Angeles, between the Los Angeles and San Gabriel rivers, the area was then a wooded section, covered with willows, poplars, cottonwoods and sycamores. The virgin soil was very rich. Newly planted fruit trees and vegetables grew rapidly.

Many of these new arrivals were from the south; Arkansas, Texas, Alabama, etc., and they brought their Southern Methodist faith with them. The town of Downey would not exist for several more years.

Rev. J.C. Simmons D.D., in his book about the Pacific Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, titled, "The History of Southern Methodism on the Pacific Coast," tells about these pioneer Methodists who met in their homes for weekly prayer meetings. He writes that in 1854 a "class" of 16 members applied for a minister to be sent to them, and that the Rev. J.F. Blythe, the Presiding Elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Stockton District, visited the group that year to investigate the possibility of establishing a church in the area.

He preached for them a number of times and formally organized this Methodist class. He left them promising that they should have a preacher the next year. At the Conference held in Sacramento, April 1855, a circuit riding minister was assigned to this pioneer group.

In setting the date for the earliest beginnings of the Methodist Church in this area we have relied on the documentation included in the Simmons book and on the counsel of our Conference Commission on Archives and History. The Reverend Lyman Ellis, a member of the Commission, offered the following Scriptural insights:

"Let's look to the Bible for an answer. In all of these references the word 'church' refers to a group of people: Romans 16, 'greet also the church in their house;' I Corinthians 16, 'The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord;' Colossians 4, 'Give my greetings to the brethren at Laodicea

and to Nympha and the church in her house;' Philemon 1, 'To Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house.

"A church is a group of people who get together with some regularity for the purpose of worship and education in the tradition of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. A building is not required. Not even a pastor is required.

"Our society does not see 'the church in your house.' The purchase of property and buildings does not make a church.

"The year 1854 is noted as the time when the Rev. J.F. Blythe was Presiding Elder of the Stockton District. The book written by the Rev. J.C. Simmons tells of the group in Los Nietos, the society that included 'Alexander Groves and a number of others who had united with them because they were Methodists and wanted a home.' This society existed before 1855 when Pastor 'J.T. Cox was sent to them from the Conference held in Sacramento, April 1855.' In the J.C. Simmons book it is stated, 'He (Presiding Elder J.F. Blythe) left them with the promise that they should have a preacher the next year.' This promise was made in the year before 1855. It is possible that the group of Methodists in Los Nietos existed even earlier than 1854, but there is nothing in the information provided to fix any earlier date."

Taking account of all the available information, and guided by Rev. Lyman's insights, the California Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church, Commission on Archives and History, recommended that we set the year of the beginning of the Downey United Methodist Church as 1854.

In 1855, the Reverend J. T. Cox was sent to the Los Nietos area to minister to the Methodists in the area. According to Edward Drewry Jervey, in his book, "History of Methodism in Southern California and Arizona," Rev. Cox was a three-hundred pound Texan, who was described as "white haired and of ruddy complexion." He had converted to Christianity at 15 from a rowdy childhood. His Christian spirit occasionally lapsed.

One day he was crossing a bridge owned by an uncouth blacksmith. The blacksmith shouted at Rev. Cox, using rather profane language. Cox approached and shook the blacksmith, saying, "You foul-mouthed villain. If it were not for my fear of God, I would beat you into jelly."

The Christians in the Los Nietos area were hard workers and successful farmers, but had little cash to pay preachers. At times the residents paid preachers from the bounty of their fields. At other times, especially between harvests, any pay was meager.

Continued to page 28

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Continued from page 27

A colleague of Rev. Cox wrote to him, "I have been studying a great scientific question, the location of the seat of hunger. Is it in the stomach or in the brain? After consulting all the best authorities, and no little personal experience, I have concluded it is migratory; first in one place and then in another." The Civil War brought grief and troubled times to the nation, and the small group of Methodists living in the Los Nietos valley continued to meet in homes and open fields. Following the war, many people came west to start life anew. Rev. John Ardis, a member of the Arkansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, reached the Los Nietos valley in 1868. He, like many others, had traveled by covered wagon. These wagons, drawn by oxen, mules, or horses proved an invaluable asset in clearing the land and in transporting supplies. Soon after his arrival, Rev. Ardis built a school and conducted private classes in it. Joining other Methodists already settled in the area, he attended several camp meetings. These meetings played an important role in the growth of this early congregation. The meetings were filled with prayer, preaching, and singing. People shouted aloud, and sometimes leaped for joy. The camp meetings would often last two or three weeks, with people living out of covered wagons, tents, or even camping on the

open ground. The emotional level was so high that the term "shouting Methodists" became familiar. The emotion of present day Methodists is still evident, but the "shouting" is less apparent. Following an 1869 camp meeting, Rev. Ardis made his schoolhouse available for regular Sunday services. The members called themselves the Los Nietos Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the town of Downey would not be founded for another five years. Joining Rev. Ardis were J. B. Glover, E. M. Miles, S. M. Adams, and W. A. Spurlock. The group received official recognition by Bishop Wightman, and Rev. Alexander Groves was sent here as pastor. In April 1869, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, founded the Los Nietos Collegiate Institute. Tracts of land, sold at auction, provided seed money for the new endeavor. The school was located at the southeast corner of College Avenue (now Paramount Boulevard) and Alameda Street. It was intended for the education of children and youth from primary grades through college. The Los Nietos Collegiate Institute was one of the first Protestant colleges in Southern California. A plaque in front of Downey's Fire Station #1 commemorates the founding of this college district.



The Dec. 2, 1874 issue of the Los Angeles Herald printed, "The Los Nietos Collegiate Institute, located at Los Nietos is enjoying considerable prosperity, having matriculated fifty-seven students during the session, fifteen of which are from abroad. The Principal, Rev. S. M. Adams and his competent assistants are doing faithful and efficient work in building up the school." A resolution by the Church Conference reads, "RESOLVED: That the prosperity of the Collegiate Institute located at Los Nietos gives us unfeigned pleasure, and that we heartily recommend it to the confidence and patronage of an enlightened public."

The Rev. S. M. Adams was one of the first men to have charge of the school. Continued to page 29

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Continued from page 28

Another of the early teachers was the Rev. E. C. Knott, father of Mr. Walter Knott of Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park. The school closed in 1879, when the University of Southern California was opening. USC was originally a Methodist affiliated school, and many of the university's founders had Downey roots.

As the congregation at Los Nietos grew it became apparent that a more appropriate church structure should be constructed. In 1873, California's Civil War governor, John Gately Downey, along with several others, purchased large tracts of land in the Los Nietos valley. They began selling 50 acre parcels for \$10.00 an acre. This was to become the town of Downey, but was of little notice at that time.

An article in the Los Angeles Herald of April 21, 1874, begins, "The tourist, traveler, or searcher after a permanent location, coming to Los Angeles, should not fail to visit Los Nietos settlement, lying twelve miles southeast of this city. The run down to the depot, which is located in the town of Los Nietos—the geographical center of the settlement—is made in thirty minutes. The first part of the road is lined on either side with orange groves, orchards, vineyards, gardens and small farms, with a plentiful dotting of neat cottage homes and country residences embowered in shady trees and partially covered with climbing vines; the whole presenting a picture pleasing to the eye and giving assurance of present comfort and future prosperity as gratifying to the resident as it is encouraging to the newcomer."

The article contains no mention of former Governor Downey's land development.

In October 1875, the Los Nietos Collegiate Institute property was sold to Dr. C.H. Riddick, a Methodist minister, and \$2,000

of the sale price was added to a building fund for the erection of the congregation's first adequate house of worship. Dr. Riddick, who was the pastor of this church during 1878-1879, served the school for two years without salary so that the money could be added to the building fund.

Through contributions of members and friends, sufficient funds were finally raised and, in 1877, during the second pastorate of the Rev. Williams Moores, the cornerstone was laid for a new church. The location was on the west side of College Avenue (Paramount Boulevard) and Alameda Street, approximately across the street from the school. The land was donated by W.H. Steel. Many in the congregation, lacking money, contributed their labor. In December 1877, the building was completed.

A notable feature of this first church building was the 110-ft. steeple, topped by an enormous golden hand with the forefinger pointing heavenward. An 800 lb. bronze bell, which was cast in Ohio and shipped around the "Horn," was raised fifty feet and placed in the belfry. This impressive bell called the people to worship and reminded them that Sunday is the Lord's day. It also tolled for the dead, roused the people in time of fire, and announced such events as the end of the Spanish-American War. Redwood lumber lined the walls and ceiling of the church. The center section of benches had a middle division separating the men from the women, even husbands and wives. The division remained for twenty years and was only removed after a controversy over what was referred to as "promiscuous seating." There was an "Amen Corner" at the right of the pulpit where some of the older men sat and encouraged the minister. The first musical instrument was a foot pumped melodeon (organ) given by Mrs. C.H. Riddick and the first organist was Mrs. Frank E. Adams.

The Los Angeles Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South convened in this church at least ten different times. The preachers and lay delegates were entertained as honored guests in the homes of members and friends. They were given the best food and lodging the community could afford. Money was scarce but hospitality was boundless.

The Move North

The biggest change to the original church building came in 1891, but what led to this change started 20 years earlier. In 1871 the Southern Pacific railroad built its line to Anaheim, and the town of Downey was later founded along the route. This resulted in a shift of population and civic activities to the north.

Sunday morning services were still held in the church, but separate Sunday evening services were held at the church and in Manning Hall in the new town of Downey. Sunday School classes were held each Sunday afternoon at the Presbyterian Church, which was then at the corner of Second and La Reina in Downey. The Church Annual Conference of 1891 recommended that the church be moved, intact, into the town of Downey, to be closer to the new population center. Some of the members objected to the move, and a few even withdrew their membership. One of the dissenters, a Captain Renfro, owned property between the spot where the church was located and the proposed new site. He refused permission to move the building across his property.

The majority of the congregation was not going to let this refusal stand in their way. They gathered one summer evening in 1891 and, as Captain Renfro slept, they began the move, crossing Captain Renfro's land under cover of darkness. Teams of horses pulled the entire church building about a mile north, its steeple and golden hand still pointing upward through the night. The

Continued to page 30

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Continued from page 29

church was placed at the southwest corner of Dolan and Second Streets where the structure continued to serve the congregation until 1922.

By then, as Downey grew, a larger sanctuary was needed. The original church structure served the members well until the early 1920s. The congregation had grown so large by then that the original facilities were no longer adequate. In 1921 the following resolution was adopted at the Quarterly Conference: "Resolved . . . that the Quarterly Conference authorize and instruct the Board of Trustees to borrow from the Los Nietos Valley Bank a sum not to exceed \$2,000 and apply same as a first payment of lots." Following minutes show that \$1,900 was borrowed from the bank. A lot bounded by Fifth Street on the North, New Street on the West, and Crawford Street (Downey Avenue) on the East, was purchased for \$3,800. \$1,900 was paid in cash. In the minutes of March 2, 1921, during the pastorate of the Reverend L. J. Miliken, we read, "Motion made and carried to ask the Board of Church Extension for donation of \$6,000 and a loan of \$10,000." A new sanctuary was erected and the church was built on several floor levels. There was a basement for Sunday School classes and social activities, a Sanctuary up several steps from street level, and more rooms in the belfry. For reasons that are unclear, the original 800 pound bell was not placed in the belfry. A cement foundation was made for the bell at the rear of the church. Perhaps the new steeple was not strong enough for a bell of this size and weight, or there were fears of earthquakes. When the church was completed a parsonage was built at the rear of the sanctuary, facing New Street.

The following article was taken from an old copy of Downey's "Live Wire" newspaper: "The Methodist Church dedicatory service with Bishop DuBose in attendance will be held Thursday. All other churches, fraternal orders, and Downey men and women's clubs have been sent a special invitation to attend. The Board of Stewards will present the church to the Bishop for dedication and during the service the audience will sing the 'Victory Song' written by Mrs. A. G. Haygood. The service will close with Mrs. H. P. Myers singing her 'Rejoice' song dedicated to the building."

After World War II, the population of Downey increased rapidly. Orange groves were giving way to subdivisions. New homes were going up and the church was feeling the pressure. Additional property was purchased immediately south of the church and a fellowship hall and several new classrooms were built, followed by the construction of the present sanctuary. The sanctuary was dedicated in June 1954 by Bishop Gerald Kennedy. The building program was completed with the construction of an office and classroom complex on the site of the old sanctuary and parsonage. Some years later, a new entrance to the sanctuary was built facing the parking area. ADA compliant restrooms were added at that time.

Many physical changes have taken place over the years, and the name of the church has changed a number of times

too. The first came with the move into the town of Downey. What had been the Los Nietos Methodist Episcopal Church, South became the Downey Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Then, in 1939, the three major branches of Methodism - the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church - joined to form the Methodist Church. With this merger it became the Downey Methodist Church. The present name resulted from the union, in 1968, of the Evangelical United Brethren with the Methodist Church, forming the United Methodist Church. But we are the same church, and the spirit that brought those original 1854 pioneers together for worship is still alive and still active in the world. The generations that have served this church, nurturing its growth, have also served the community faithfully and with pride.

We have a tradition of outreach to others. Our church facilities have been home to other denominations and ethnic congregations until they grew large enough to support their own facilities. The congregation of Temple Ner Tamid met here from 1959 to 1962. We shared our sanctuary with a Korean Methodist congregation for several years. They moved to their own facilities in 1994. We now enjoy the full partnership of a thriving Hispanic congregation led by the Reverend David Achon.

We are blessed with a superior nursery school at our church. All children from the Downey area are welcomed. They are better prepared to enter school and they learn the skills that make them good citizens and friends. We are also committed to providing outreach to the many community groups who use our facilities. We sponsor Troop 2 of the Boy Scouts of America. Troop 2 was chartered to our church in 1923, making it one of the oldest Troops in southern California. Troop 2 is rightfully proud to have had many Eagle Scouts come from within their members.

This church, and the people who have worshipped here, have participated in many joyous events. Weddings and baptisms of members and friends are a way of affirming our faith in the future. Funerals and memorial services validate our life here on earth, and attest to our belief in life eternal. An example of the joyous events would be the marriage of Richard Carpenter, of the Carpenters music duo, to his wife Mary in 1984, and the subsequent baptism of their children. We also celebrated the life of Richard's sister Karen, after her tragic death in 1983. Weddings, baptisms, memorial services, and funerals are shared events. They bring the community together in many ways. For more than 160 years this congregation has sought to bring our community closer together. We are brothers and sisters; children of a loving God. Our shared faith has made a strong bond of fellowship, and our shared faith has led us on the path to service.

We reside in the present and we can take pride in our past, but we look forward, with God's help and guidance, to an even greater future!

*Richard Daggett is the historian for Downey United Methodist Church.*

# OCTOBER

■ Elizabeth Castillo, a Jr. Miss Downey Princess in 2012, was named to the cast of "Betrothed," a film in which a simple errand turns into a nightmare when college student Audra West crosses paths with two psychotic brothers. Audra finds herself trapped in the middle of the desert held captive by an insane, dysfunctional family, and betrothed to one of the brothers. The film is scheduled for a 2015 release.

■ William L. Walker Hall, a 58,574 sq. ft. facility housing 27 new technology-equipped classrooms, officially opened at Downey High. The facility also houses the school's administration offices, and allowed for the removal of 30 bungalows from the school campus. Walker Hall is named after William L. Walker, former superintendent of the Downey school district.

Walker was born in Stephen, Minn. and moved to California where he received his master's degree from the University of Southern California. He started his career at Downey High School, also known as Downey Union High School, as the Junior High School Principal in 1930. (The junior high school was technically part of the high school).

In 1942 he became superintendent of the Downey Union High School District, but in 1947 he was stricken with a heart attack, and left for a year. In 1948, he returned at his own request, taking the job of teacher and counselor. He was a counselor until 1957 when he retired.

Before he retired, staff, administration and students honored him by holding a "Bill Walker Day" to pay him respect for all his guidance and dedication. In total, Walker devoted 29 years to the Downey District.

In 1959, to honor Walker for his dedication to the Downey Unified School District, the administration building was named in his honor.

Walker's son was killed during WWII. A photograph of him hangs in the B Building, along with 15 other former students who died in the conflict.

■ Cpl. Moses Lechuga, a Downey resident and World War II veteran who escaped from a German prisoner of war camp, was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. He was 92.

Lechuga joined the Army in October 1943 and was a corporal in the infantry during WWII. He was part of the 90th Infantry Division that led the invasion at Utah Beach on D-Day in 1944. After he made it off the beach, he and some others were called to assist in the fighting in St. Mere-Eglise and St. Lo, France. His unit continued fighting through the hedge rows and after breaking through one, his squad was taken captive by an armored unit of the Nazi SS.

As a POW in Germany he had even more "adventures". Although being of Apache ancestry, his mother was a devout Catholic and named him Moses. That name almost got him loaded onto a Jewish POW train car once. He was also tortured and beaten severely after being re-captured for his two escapes and was successful on his third escape.

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A YEAR TO REMEMBER

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Griffiths Middle School teacher Julie Romero was named L.A. County Teacher of the Year.

Eventually being reunited with American troops when Gen. Patton's Armored Division came through, he recovered in Camp Lucky Strike (one of the many "Cigarette Camps" for recovering POWs). He was then just waiting to be shipped home along with all the other GI's after the war. It took a while but he returned to New York aboard the Queen Mary in its Troop Transport configuration; a definite no-frills passage. Then it was a train ride back to California where he learned he still owed the Army a few months of service if he desired an honorable instead of a medical discharge. So then it was back up to Camp Roberts, California where he finished his service obligation and received his honorable discharge. Moses earned a Purple Heart for his war service and in 1988 was awarded the POW Medal during a recognition ceremony at the Long Beach Naval Station for his internment by Germany.

■ Blanca Pacheco was installed as president of Downey Kiwanis Club.

■ Furman Park's new walking trail opened.



More than 600 people attended the Downey Rotary/YMCA pancake breakfast at Downey High. The breakfast is now in its 66th year.

■ Despite its revival as a respectable football program, Warren High was no match for the Vikings, with Downey High cruising to a 49-19 win in the cross-town matchup.

■ Warren High's band and color guard started their 2014 competitive season on the right note, winning first place honors at the 29th annual South Bay Invitational Field Tournament.

■ The third annual Downey CROP Hunger Walk raised \$11,000 to fight local and global hunger eradication efforts.

■ Warren High senior Hilda Atuncar beat out more than 10,000 high school students across the country to win a \$10,000 college scholarship from Nordstrom. Hilda earned a 4.13 GPA as a junior at Warren High last year. She is enrolled in Honors English and AP Spanish, and is a member of the Book Club, secretary of the Mock Trial Club and vice president of the Garden Club.

■ No longer able to compete with fast-changing technology, Videomax, one of Downey's last remaining video rental stores, announced it was closing.

■ The 80-member Chorale Bel Canto performed a concert at the Downey Theatre.

■ PIH Health Hospital – Downey (formerly Downey Regional Medical Center) marked its one-year anniversary with a community open house.

■ Warren High's Stay Connected Club turned Downey Avenue pink, tying pink ribbons to downtown street lights for breast cancer awareness.

■ Claims by a transgender student that she was bullied and discriminated against prompted the Downey Unified School District to enter into a voluntary agreement in which it would work

to ensure gender nonconforming and transgender students have a safe educational environment. The student alleged that in elementary school her make-up was confiscated, despite other girls being allowed to wear it. The student also detailed how she was forced to write an apology letter for making male students feel uncomfortable because she had worn makeup.

Additional allegations include being removed from group counseling sessions with other students because of concerns she'd discuss her gender identity, being called her "male name", and being encouraged to transfer to a different school where her peers wouldn't know she was transgender.

The student did eventually transfer to a different Downey middle school, where she is currently enrolled.

■ Dr. Helena Chui, Chair of the USC Department of Neurology and a world-renowned physician and researcher, was the keynote speaker at a stroke prevention seminar at the Rio Hondo Event Center. The free event attracted more than 300 people.

■ At a town hall meeting, Councilman Mario Guerra announced that Vallarta Supermarkets will open a grocery store at the mostly-abandoned Beach's Market property on the southwest corner of Imperial Highway and Paramount Boulevard. Guerra said the supermarket will be completely renovated, and Vallarta plans to add an additional 10,000 square feet of grocery space.



The Downey Police Department revealed a redesigned Neighborhood Watch sign.

NOVEMBER

■ In an upset, school teacher Sean Ashton defeated heavily-endorsed Robert Kiefer for a seat on the City Council. Physician Dr. Shahira A-Malek finished third.

Tony Mendoza defeated Mario Guerra to represent the 32nd state senate district. Measure O, the \$248 million DUSD bond, passed with 60 percent of the vote.

■ Les Fendia, Paul Wilson and Joe Francis were inducted into Warren High's Hall of Fame.

Fendia escaped to the U.S. from Nazi-occupied Hungary as a child, and set several records as a member of Warren High's track team. Wilson was also a member of the track team, setting several school and state records. Fendia was a longtime teacher and activities director at Warren High.

■ Artist and illustrator Sean Norvet debuted his first solo exhibit at Stay Gallery.

■ Downey High's girls volleyball team finished a perfect 10-0 in league to win the SGVL title.

■ A victory over Dominguez High gave the Downey High football team the SGVL championship.

■ With a 12-1 league record, Warren High's girls tennis team won the league championship.

■ Road work forced the closure of Gallatin Road at Lakewood Boulevard for 48 hours, adding to heavy traffic congestion and resulting in lost revenue at local businesses.

■ In their first time competing, a team of Griffiths Middle School students advanced to the semifinals of the VEX Robotics Competition.



The City Council agreed to pay \$16,000 for a 16-ft tall mural of "Downey Doodles," an original art piece created by Downey resident Don Lamkin. "I poured all my memories about my great upbringing in this town into this painting," explained Lamkin. "The painting includes all of the things that make me feel proud about Downey." The mural will be painted on the side of the Porto's Bakery parking structure, facing Downey Avenue.

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Continued from page 31

■ Edward Roybal, the father of Downey Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his pioneering work as a Hispanic legislator.

■ Microsoft selected Downey High as a "showcase school" for its "excellence in transforming its learning environment to deliver more personalized education to students, using mobile and cloud technology to better prepare students for success in the workplace."

■ Donald James Vincent, a 31-year-old freelance ice skating coach, was sentenced to 98 years to life in prison for sexually abusing two children.

■ Award-winning children's author Kathryn Fitzmaurice made an appearance at the Downey City Library.

■ JPL's Artur B. Chmielewski was a guest speaker at the Columbia Memorial Space Center.

■ The Downey Theatre released its 2014-15 season schedule, highlighted by a joint performance next May by comedians Louie Anderson and Rita Rudner. The season schedule also includes performances by the Mariachi Divas and Morris Day & The Time, and Starship.

■ Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard penned a letter supporting Los Angeles' bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics.



## Q&A with Sean Ashton

By Eric Pierce

Sean Ashton was elected to the Downey City Council in November and was officially sworn-in Dec. 9.

### 1.) Now that you've had some time to breathe and unwind, can you reflect on your campaign?

I just feel honored and humbled to have been elected to serve the city. I am looking forward to getting started on the city council.

### 2.) Is there anything you want to immediately do or change as a council member?

I know I have a few appointments to make on various committees but I'm going to make sure that I have the right person on each committee to make sure that those committees are able to function. The last thing that I want is a committee that is not able to make quorum because of something that I have done.

### 3.) In an earlier interview you stated that Downey "needs its own police and fire departments." Do you still feel that way?

Downey will always need to have its own police and fire departments. That is part of what makes Downey a special place to live.

### 4.) What is your opinion of the Promenade shopping center development?

I have not seen much development with the Promenade yet. I'm not sure who is confirmed to go into there yet except for a few announcements here and there. I think that if it is going to be like the Downey Landing with a hotel, then we are not making the best use of the property. Hopefully whatever plans are in place, they involve doing something with Building 1 because it is in such a state of disrepair. Considering the history of the building, it is really a shame that it looks the way it does now.

### 5.) Would you support a Walmart in Downey?

I remember seeing a statistic somewhere saying that Downey has created over 8,000 jobs over the past 4+ years. I don't think that we have been creating the right kind of jobs. It's great that we have a Dunkin' Donuts but we need to stop trying to go for the easy fix by creating minimum wage jobs and focus on creating jobs where a family can support themselves without working 2 or 3 jobs. With all of that said, I don't think we need

a Walmart type of store in Downey.

### 6.) What is your opinion on creating additional housing in downtown Downey, specifically at the former Avenue Theater?

I don't have a problem with more housing, I just don't think that we need more housing in downtown Downey, especially if it is going to be built with federal money and used as low income housing. I think that it would be nice to have it turned into a House of Blues type of place where famous bands can perform in an intimate setting that will draw people into the downtown area where they can have a good time before, during, and after the show.

### 7.) Where would you like to see Downey eight years from now?

Better roads, better jobs, more things to do in Downey besides going to restaurants.

### 8.) In your opinion, what makes Downey a special place to live?

Good schools, our own police and fire departments, having our own library, a community where 100+ people will show up at a random place in Downey on a Saturday morning just to pick up trash, and having parents who will help out with little league, PTA, AYSO, etc. long after their kids stopped going because they want to make sure that other kids have the same opportunity as their kids did.

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# Downey City Library



## City of Downey



# Columbia Memorial Space Center



Making a Difference in Our Community—Happy Holidays!

## Former Downey High teacher trades in classroom for refugee camp in Jordan

By Christian Brown

**DOWNEY** – Amber Savage was only five years into her teaching career at Downey High School when she decided to buy a one-way ticket to Damascus.

"It was a bit dramatic – I knew I was taking a leap of faith," she said.

An internship at Human Rights Watch first exposed the former history teacher to humanitarian aid work, inspiring her to leave the comforts of home and go where the need was greatest: the Middle East.

"There's a bit of a chicken versus the egg conflict because it's difficult to get hired in the humanitarian sector if you haven't had conflict zone experience," she said. "But you can't work in a conflict zone until you get a job. Luckily the pieces fell together and I was able to find work."

Savage began at a Syrian non-profit organization, which provided services to disabled children, but soon found herself in Ramallah, just outside of Jerusalem, once her visa expired. However, Savage still discovered work helping Palestinian women with legal aid.

After moving to Amon, Jordan four years ago, Savage took up her current assignment: Feeding Syrian refugees. Today, she helps feed more than 310,000 Syrian refugees living in the Zaahari refugee camp through the efforts of the United Nations World Food Programme.

"It's heartbreaking," said Savage, who oversees monthly food appropriations to mostly middle-class families displaced by a brutal Syrian civil war and the terrorist activities of ISIS, which refers to itself as the Islamic State.

"The tragedy of this war is a generation of young people who will have a very bleak future and the conflict is not showing any signs of ending."

Working out of pre-fab bungalows and tents along the northern border of Syria and Jordan, Savage and other aid workers distribute pre-loaded ATM cards to refugees and upload new funds every month. The e-vouchers are provided by MasterCard and the funds uploaded through a local Jordanian bank.

"They really like it [because] nobody has to know they're a refugee," Savage said. "They talk a lot about the dignity it gives them. One guy told me he feels like a European because he's never had a credit card before."



Savage, who speaks just enough Arabic to get by, said many families have already spent their entire life savings by the time they reach the border, making food an understandable priority to parents.

"Some have to decide each month whether to pay rent or feed their children," she said. "It's hard to imagine being in that position."

The U.N. currently offers refugees \$34 a month per person. The amount allows families to buy sufficient portions to reach a basic 2,100-calorie diet. However, assistance is gradually paired down, Savage said.

"It's hard to cut people off, but we don't have enough money to feed everyone," she said. "It costs \$4 million to feed everyone in the camps." Including those who live outside Zaahari, the total jumps to \$18 million every month – and with other international crises like Ebola, Savage says the Syrian crisis is getting old, lending itself to "donate fatigue."

Despite the risks, recent polling by the U.N. indicated that 34 percent of Syrian refugees say they will move back to Syria if they can't receive adequate food allowances. The figure is troubling given that 60 percent of the refugees now leaving Syria claim it is due to ISIS, according to Savage.

"It's worrying," Savage said. "There are fringe groups pledging allegiance to ISIS [here], but the Jordanian army is quite strong so they are immediately arrested."

While Jordanians grow concerned that nearby violence may break out in their streets, inside Zaahari, Savage sees something completely different – the entrepreneurial spirit of the Syrian people.

"They've developed their own address system – there's a pizza delivery man, a travel agent," she said. "You can buy a bridal dress or a refrigerator. I buy my bread from the Syrian bread maker. In three years, they've built a city – it's a dynamic place to be."

While Savage admits some family and friends think she's a little crazy for relocating to the volatile region, the 33-year-old isn't planning on leaving humanitarian aid work anytime soon.

"I'm sure my parents are like, 'what is she doing?' But I know they're very proud," she said. "It's not a traditional career, but I love the Middle East. I don't know what my next step will be, but who knows, I haven't been to Asia yet."

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## Downey taps former museum consultant and science nerd to run space center

By Christian Brown

DOWNEY – Recreating the past isn't a part of Benjamin Dickow's mission statement. On the contrary, he gets a kick out of imagining the future.

That's probably why the city of Downey tapped the former museum consultant and space enthusiast in September to lead the Columbia Memorial Space Center, which is still yet to find its voice in a community of regional science learning centers. Dickow may just have the solution: Go big or go home.

"My vision tends to be big impact," said Dickow, who previously oversaw education and exhibits at the California Science Center and the prestigious Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. "We're not a second banana – it can happen here in a few years. It's not impossible."

Dickow continued: "It's rare to see a city support something like this. That's a huge reason I was excited to come here. We owe it to those we're memorializing to sustain it."

For Dickow, science is less a noun than a verb.

"As a science communicator, it's a codification of how human beings learn about the world around us," he said. "Going through the process opens up a beautiful plane that makes me feel connected to people and the world."

That desire to connect was no doubt influenced by the 1980 PBS television mini-series "Cosmos," which Dickow says he watched before bedtime every Sunday night as young kid.

"I was fascinated by the images," Dickow recalled. "Carl Sagan was my personal hero."

Coupled with the 1977 release of Star Wars, Dickow was convinced he was destined to work for NASA as an astronaut. While that didn't pan out, a career in science museum curation, education, and business development did.

In addition to his work at larger museum institutions, Dickow also founded the Venice-based West Side Science Club, an out-of-school workshop that brings hands-on science experiences to elementary and middle school students living in low-income housing.

Perhaps unlike his predecessors, Dickow sees the CMSC as a gathering place for people – of all ages – to get together in order to experience science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

"The museum model is a 19th century way to share information," he said. "In the 21st century, social gathering remains, but the information sharing has to change. The information itself is ubiquitous – people already come in with knowledge." As a result, Dickow is striving to shift the conversation away from just facts to personal experience at the space center. "I'm not opposed to artifacts, but we can't rest on that. We need to make them [the stakeholders] feel like they have ownership," he said. "And everyone has a stake in it."

While the CMSC still accommodates mostly local field trips from schools, Dickow envisions more audience participation, targeting not just kids and families, but young professionals as well. For him, that starts with taking science outside the four walls – literally – through portable experiences around town.


However, with an already largely subsidized budget, building partnerships with "untapped resources" is Dickow's first order of business. The task seems daunting, but Dickow, who lives in Highland Park with his wife, Laurel, says that's exactly what attracted him to Downey.

"There's potential here," he said. "As a museum consultant, I've been on my own for quite some time. It's great to be on a team again."

While he seems ready to get his hands dirty, Dickow is adamant that he needs the residents' help.

"We need full participation to be relevant," he said. "We're in this together so I'm excited to hear what they have to say. This is not my place, it's our place."





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## Where did readers take the Patriot in 2014?



"The world is a book, and those who do not travel see only a page." – Saint Augustine

In 2014, Downey Patriot readers took their hometown newspaper around the globe, including Italy, Switzerland, Argentina, Canada, China, Japan, Romania, Thailand, Paris, Brazil, Austria, Mexico, Ecuador, Honduras, Jamaica, Ireland and even Antarctica.



The Patriot had extensive domestic travels as well, including multiple trips to New York City, the Hawaiian islands, Sacramento and San Francisco.



## DECEMBER

- The 63rd annual Downey Christmas Parade was held on Downey Avenue. Jennifer DeKay, publisher of The Downey Patriot, was grand marshal.
- The Downey Sertoma Club held its annual Toys for Tots Christmas dinner.
- Downey hosted its annual tree-lighting ceremony outside City Hall.
- The Columbia Memorial Space Center held a public viewing party as Orion, NASA's newest spacecraft, launched from Cape Canaveral.

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**Friends of the Downey City Library**

The Friends is a non-profit organization of volunteers which promotes library use and provides financial support for many library programs throughout the year. It also sponsors author events and operates a used book store near the young adult section of the library. Joining the Friends of the Downey City Library is an inexpensive way to show that you believe our library plays an important role in our community. Yearly membership is \$5 for students, \$10 for individuals, \$25 for families and \$75 for businesses and organizations. Membership applications are available in the Friends Book Store. Stop in and see us and see the wonderful things going on in our library!

The following is a list of people whose obituary appeared in The Downey Patriot in 2014, through Dec. 11.

- Robert Acree
- Richard Aguilera
- James Allen
- Richard Allen
- Fionnuala Anderson
- Abraham Apidgian
- Stella Armas
- Roy Asmus
- Anthony Baca
- Barbara Bale
- Edwin Bauer
- David Bitticks
- Florence Bitticks
- Ella Bretz
- Evelyn Busch
- Otilia Cabrera
- Shirley Cawley
- Lowell Charlton
- Robert Colley
- Betty Collier
- Benny Colon
- Evelyn Colvin
- Daniel Crespo
- George Delis
- Angelo D'Eramo
- Frederick Dickinson
- Marie Dorin
- Priscilla Dunnum
- Barbara Dykes
- Dale Eckert
- Richard Elliott Sr.
- Gerri Emmi
- Stuart Finck
- Dolly Fisher
- Deborah Fitzsimmons
- Porfirio Flores
- Maria Garaduno
- Margaret Garde
- Linda Gatlin
- Sophie Giebler
- Frances Gillett
- Pat Gomez-Pratt
- Claralee Griffin
- Clyde Griffin
- Guy Gum
- Paul Gurrola
- Thomas Hale
- Sylvia Hall
- Ardys Halterman
- Jeanie Harman
- Raoul Hoeschen
- Joyce Hollow
- Showkat Khanna
- Cecilia Kimberly
- Jimmy Lagousis
- William Landsdale
- Vernon Lee
- Wilbert Lidtke
- Juanita Llamas
- Lloyd Long
- Colleen Lumley
- Joanne Mahr
- James Mann
- Yvonne Martin
- Gwendolyn Maughan
- Dorothy McFall
- Margaret McMaster
- Charlotte Meier
- Rosemary Meyer
- Mary Miller
- Sylvia Miller
- Paul Minnig
- Richard Morrison
- Joan De Munbrun
- Joe Muniz
- Dominic (DD) Mustin II
- Sheila Nicholas
- Franklin O'Brien
- Pankaj Parekh
- Delores Peterson
- Allen Phair
- Judy Pratt
- Maximus Presta
- Shannon Rafferty
- Kathleen Reuter
- Vivian Rice
- Darryl Roberts
- Marilyn Royce
- Roscoe Shaffert
- Richard Sharpe
- James Shull
- Shon Smith
- Rick Stoneberg
- Mary Taylor
- Antonia Thomas
- Col. Clark Trainer
- Joel True
- Jean Tuohino
- Gene Valdes Sr.
- Patricia Van Riper
- Dolores Vaughn
- Lucille Veltri
- Lois Waters
- Wanda Wendell



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## Downey Christmas Parade



## Message from the Publisher



They say change is inevitable but when it happens so suddenly, change – even positive change – can be very jarring.

Some of my best friends were blessed with promotions and new career opportunities this year, validation of their years of hard work and dedication. It's exciting to see them embrace and conquer these new challenges (and it's also fun to help celebrate their accomplishments!). I'm truly lucky to call these smart, motivated people my friends.

Locally, it's impossible to ignore the change taking place all around us. Our major thoroughfares are being uprooted and reconstructed, causing traffic nightmares and literal dust storms in the middle of the afternoon. The worst, hopefully, is behind us, and the payoff will be smooth streets and aesthetically-pleasing median islands.

This year we also saw a surge of new businesses and entertainment options come into Downey. If you were so inclined, you could take in an art exhibit, enjoy a cocktail, and catch a movie all in one night and without leaving downtown. When was the last time that was possible?

Change is also evident in the young families choosing to invest in Downey, either by purchasing a home here or opening a business. Many of these people are becoming stakeholders by educating themselves on local issues and becoming active community participants. You see this at neighborhood watch meetings, at Keep Downey Beautiful cleanups, and at ribbon cuttings. Downey is becoming a younger city, and we're blessed

that the younger generation sees the value in giving back to their community.

Although there is change happening all around, the dedicated staff that produces The Downey Patriot remains strong. Editor Eric Pierce oversees all the editorial content that publishes in The Downey Patriot and The Norwalk Patriot. Writer Christian Brown works with Eric regarding story ideas and community events. The Downey Patriot also works with contributing writers Mark Fetter who covers as many high school sporting events as possible, as well as Dr. Alan Frischer who educates us in leading happy, healthy lives. Cristina Gonzales is our graphic artist and Jonathan Fox heads up our Production Department. Julie Ledesma processes all the legal notices and works closely with Linda Larson who oversees the Classified ads each week. Dorothy Michael and MaryAnn Sourial are the display advertising representatives. I am so proud to work with this team of talented individuals. Congratulations to Eric, Christian, Jonathan and Cristina who were finalists in the LA Press Club Awards.

Personally, 2014 has been a year of progress as I continue to explore ways The Downey Patriot can interact with the community. I can't reveal too much, but in the coming months you'll notice changes at the Patriot, mostly in technology and how news is consumed and shared by readers. While the weekly printed newspaper is our staple -- and we remain committed to it -- we can't ignore that a growing number of people get their news via smartphone or tablet.

We're lucky that so many people enjoy the news we deliver on a daily basis, we just need to make sure that the information is conveniently accessible to as many people as possible. We're excited for these changes and can't wait to reveal them in the coming months.

Looking back on 2014, this was a year of transformation for myself, my friends and my community. Yes, it was exciting, and at times a little stressful, but even scarier is the thought of everyone moving forward while you remain standing still. And we here at The Downey Patriot have no intention of doing that.

I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season, and I thank you so much for reading the Patriot.

*Jennifer DeKay*

# REFORMING SACRAMENTO

## REFORMS THAT ARE NOW LAW

Assemblymember Garcia's "Political Conduct, Ethics & Public Trust Acts of 2014" measures signed by Governor Jerry Brown.

**AB 1673 Eliminating Influence Peddling:** prevents lobbyists from hosting political fundraisers at their homes and offices.

**AB 1666 Penalties & Bribes:** doubles existing restitution fine amounts, prohibits the use of campaign funds to pay a restitution fine, and instead forces politicians to pay fine out of their personal assets.

**AB 1692 Personal Use of Campaign Funds:** prevents campaign funds from being used to pay for fines that are the result of abuse of personal use of campaign fund laws and instead forces politicians to pay fine out of their personal assets.

**AB 1596 Vote by Mail:** requires all vote-by-mail applications, when completed, to be mailed directly to the county registrar's office and not to middle men or political campaigns.

### District Office

8255 Firestone Boulevard, #203  
Downey, CA 90241

[www.assembly.ca.gov/Garcia](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/Garcia)  
[Assemblymember.Garcia@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:Assemblymember.Garcia@assembly.ca.gov)  
(562) 861-5803



## A MESSAGE FROM ASSEMBLYMEMBER CRISTINA GARCIA

Two years ago, you sent me to the State Capitol to work to clean up the mess. When our own State Senator was indicted on political corruption charges, I was the only member of the legislature to call for his immediate resignation. My colleagues were not happy but I would rather have them upset with me than you.

This year, Governor Brown signed several of my reform bills into law. Now it's harder for lobbyists to influence legislators and anyone to cheat in local elections.

I am humbled to be able to continue to work for you and continue to fight for reform.

*Cristina Garcia*



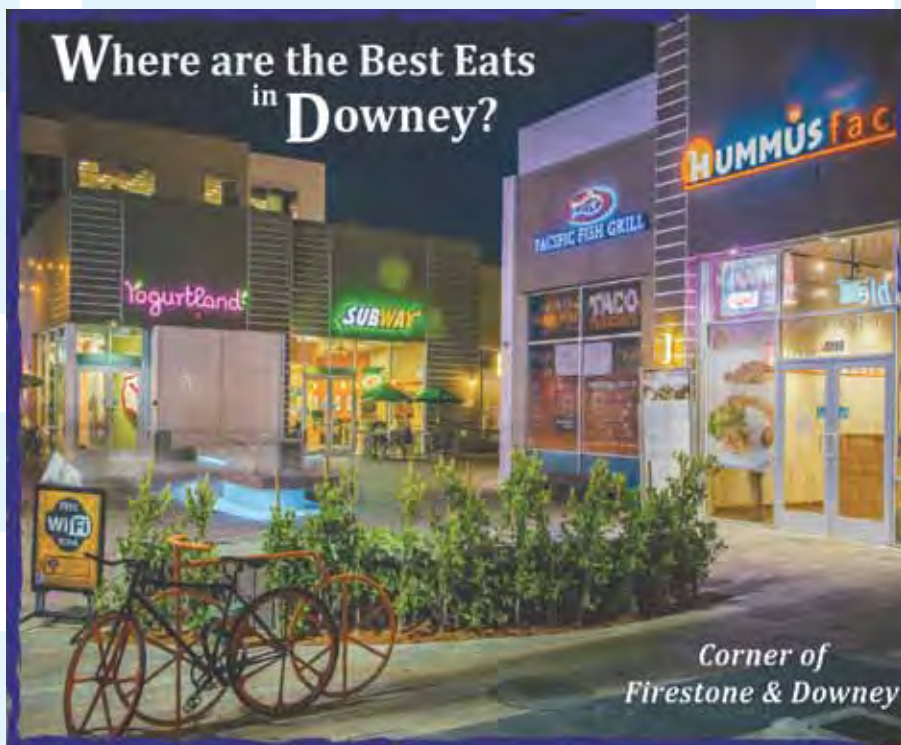
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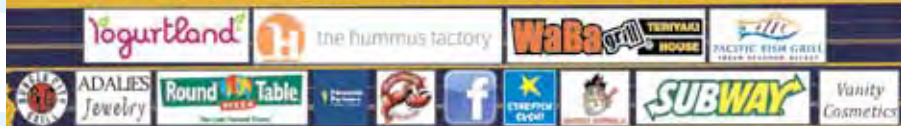
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