

# Downey 2015

YEAR IN REVIEW

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## INTRODUCTION

By Eric Pierce

Reno, Nev., is known as the “Biggest Little City in the World,” but that slogan could also apply to Downey.

Downey is home to about 111,000 people, spread over 12 1/2 square miles, dead center between four bustling Southern California freeways. It’s a proud “independent” city, meaning it supplies its own police and fire departments as opposed to having to rely on L.A. County like Whittier, Cerritos and so many other cities. Downey also provides its own school system that manages a network of 13 elementary schools, four middle schools, and three high schools (not to mention two more private high schools and three K-8 private campuses that call Downey home).

Downey has three hospitals (including the best rehabilitation hospital west of the Mississippi), 11 convalescent centers, and numerous retirement facilities. Downey is large enough to have its own Superior Court building, which is located adjacent to L.A. County Public Library headquarters (also in Downey).

The point is, Downey is a “large” city by many definitions. In fact, it’s the 53rd largest city in California in terms of population, ahead of Costa Mesa, Carlsbad, Burbank and Temecula.

But in many ways, Downey remains a community with small-town charm. Rows of ranch-style homes with neatly-manicured lawns line the city, reminders of the post- World War II housing boom, when soldiers returned home and settled here to start families.

You would be hard-pressed to walk Downey Avenue, or into a grocery store, or into Porto’s Bakery, and not bump into a friend or acquaintance. The mayor has an office on the third floor of City Hall, and you could walk right in and talk to him if you wanted.

Downey even has its own weekly, independently-owned newspaper, a rarity in today’s times. (Bonus: The publisher isn’t a delusional narcissist either.)

It’s a charming life in Downey, so when bad things shatter the relative tranquility of the community, it can be jarring.

Never was that more apparent than in 2015.

It started in September, when an armed carjacker took hostages inside Chris & Pitts restaurant. The ordeal played out live on the evening news, culminating with a SWAT team storming the restaurant and killing the hostage-taker. Luckily, no innocent lives were taken.

A week later, Downey made national news again when a wild brawl was recorded outside the Buffalo Wild Wings at Stonewood Center. No one was seriously hurt, and all things considered it wasn’t that big a deal, but it was an embarrassing moment for the city.

Then on Nov. 18, a week before Thanksgiving, the unimaginable occurred when Downey police officer Ricardo “Ricky” Galvez was shot and killed outside the Downey police station. To the national media, Galvez’s murder was another example of the growing resentment towards law enforcement. In Downey, however, that narrative was displaced by feelings of grief, distress and unbelievable sorrow.

Galvez was a U.S. war veteran, a community volunteer, and a champion of the vulnerable population, whether that meant the homeless, disabled or elderly. In one well-documented case, Galvez paid the vehicle registration for a recently-widowed elderly driver he had pulled over for expired tags.

The motives of Galvez’s killers mattered none – at least not right now – but what was important to Downey in the immediate aftermath of this tragedy was to come together and comfort each other.

Galvez’s senseless killing cast a pall over 2015 and makes it difficult to remember that something very special happened in Downey this year. For an entire week in July, Downey hosted 130 athletes and trainers from Ireland, who traveled to Southern California for the Special Olympics World Games. Downey was generous, kind and charitable to its Irish guests, and received international attention from ESPN for its hospitality.

It’s also important to note the development of the Promenade, the giant 77-acre retail development behind Downey Landing. As of this writing, 24 Hour Fitness is already open and Cinemark, Floor & Decor, and several other stores and restaurants are days away from opening their doors. (Somehow the Promenade morphed from a swanky, high-end retail and entertainment complex to a Long Beach Towne Center clone – not that that’s necessarily a bad thing.)

Downey’s 2015 was emotionally exhausting, and it’s safe to say the community welcomes the new adventures of 2016, of which there will be many. It will be the 60th anniversary of Downey’s incorporation, and you can bet there will be plenty of parties and celebrations. There will also be several changes politically, as two council members (Roger Brossmer and Luis Marquez) are termed out of office, and a third (Alex Saab) is up for re-election.

Goodbye, 2015. It’s definitely been a year we will never forget.

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## Downey 2015 Year In Review

IS AN END OF THE YEAR PUBLICATION PRODUCED BY THE DOWNEY PATRIOT

**JENNIFER DEKAY**  
Publisher

**ERIC PIERCE**  
Editor

**CHRISTIAN BROWN**  
Staff Writer

**DOROTHY MICHAEL**  
Display Advertising

**MARYANN SOURIAL**  
Display Advertising

**LINDA LARSON**  
Classified Advertising

**JULIE LEDESMA**  
Legal Notices

**CRISTINA GONZALES**  
Production

**JONATHAN FOX**  
Production

**ALEX DOMINGUEZ**  
Contributing Writer

**MARK FETTER**  
Contributing Writer

**DR. ALAN FRISCHER**  
Contributing Writer

**JAY RANTS**  
Contributing Writer

**CAROL KEARNS**  
Contributing Writer

**DONALD MCCORMICK**  
Contributing Writer

**JOHN ZANDER**  
Photography

**GABRIEL ENAMORADO**  
Photography

## January



Millions of people around the globe watched as the Downey Rose Float Association's 63rd consecutive entry in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade, themed "Inspiring Stories," traveled down Colorado Boulevard.

The float, titled "Home for the Holidays," was conceptualized by Jeff Shadic, Kelley Roberts and Jason Redfox, with the final concept rendering by Thom Neighbors.

The 53-ft. long float was described as a "picture perfect winter wonderland. Sitting high on a snow covered hill, nestled in the pine trees, is a custom built Victorian house, covered with yellow lentil." It featured a two-story house with smoking chimney, numerous windows and window coverings, a shingled, snow-topped roof and was accented with a front porch, complete with a swing.

The base of the float was saturated with 6,000 white roses, and the frozen river was framed with blue and white hydrangeas, blue and white iris, orchids and spider mums. The various arrangements feature red, pink and purple roses, star gazer lilies, white calla lilies, pine cones and cedar greens.

The float won the National Trophy for "Best Depiction of Life in USA - Past, Present or Future."



The building that housed the world's first Taco Bell came under "imminent threat of demolition," according to the Downey Conservancy, a Downey-based preservation group.

The building, located at 7112 Firestone Blvd., was opened by founder Glen Bell in March 1962.

After the Patriot published a story on the building's status, and tweeted that the site may be demolished, Taco Bell replied, "Not if we can help it" and announced a "Save Taco Bell" social media campaign.

To the Downey community,  
Thank You for your continued support!

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Our Kids Deserve The Best.



► Ladies Leadership, a girls club at Warren High, launched an empowerment conference for young ladies. There were 10 speakers, including Assemblymember Cristina Garcia.

► In January 2015, the Downey Museum of Art hosted its first show in some time, though it took place in South Gate.

► “Vic Joachim Smith - Early Work” featured the work of artist Vic Smith, who exhibited throughout Europe and Asia in the 1950s and ‘60s.

The art show was preceded by a performance of “Off Kilter,” a short play produced and directed by Downey resident Alistair Hunter.

► Several local athletes were named to the Press-Telegram’s 2014 Dream Team.

For football, Downey High honorees included Daevon Vigilant

(Newcomer of the Year), Chris Blanton (first team), Darrian Franklin (first team), Jason Thomas (second team) Justin Huff (second team), Manny Ramirez (honorable mention), Cameron Carr (honorable mention) and Geo DeLoera (honorable mention).

For the Bears, Steven Zepeda and Eric Rodriguez earned honorable mentions.

Downey’s Heather Schnars made the girls volleyball Dream Team. She was the only player from the San Gabriel Valley League to make the Dream Team.

► Louis Morales was elected president of the Downey Razorbacks for an unprecedented 17th consecutive year. Other officers include Robert Lara, 2nd VP; Reina Perez, secretary; and Jay Liggoria, cheer coordinator.

► The Downey Symphony performed its annual winter concert at the Downey Theatre, featuring a harp soloist and the world premiere of a new work titled “Five Variations on Loss and Isolations.”

► Plans to convert the historic Rives Mansion into a luxury restaurant and wine garden have come to a standstill after homeowners Carmen and Oscar Rivera fell nearly 60 months behind on mortgage payments last year.

This is according to Ralph Verdugo, Downey resident and former owner of Los Angeles Brewing Company, who signed a seven-year lease with the Riveras in July 2013 in hopes of opening an upscale steakhouse at the mansion, located at the intersection of Paramount Boulevard and Third Street.

“It’s sad and depressing,” said Verdugo, who already spent

\$400,000 restoring the home’s floors, walls, and windows before seeing a posting from the bank that confirmed the house was in foreclosure. “I called the owners and they said it was a misunderstanding, but then they stopped returning my calls.”

Uncertain of the home’s future, Verdugo said all restoration efforts at the mansion stopped nearly five months ago. He has since taken the Riveras to court, suing the couple for breaching their contract and concealing their intent to sell the house underneath him.

While owner Carmen Rivera confirmed the historic Downey landmark is facing foreclosure, she also said she and her husband evicted Verdugo after he failed to pull the proper permits and get renovations approved by her.

“I am the victim here. I haven’t done any abuses,” she said. “[Verdugo] delayed and delayed so the property would fall into foreclosure and he could buy it. We’re working with the bank now to modify our payments.”

Inside the Rives Mansion, the main floor dining room and kitchen were completely gutted. An upstairs bathroom has also been stripped down to studs.

► Former mayor Mario Guerra was roasted by friends and community leaders at a fundraising event for Stay Gallery.

► Pastor Daphne Marie Gascot Arias was installed as senior minister of Downey Memorial Christian Church.

► The City Council agreed to pay more than \$18,000 to install security cameras at Brookshire Park.

Re-Elected

D O W N E Y


T E A C H E R S

A S S O C I A T I O N

On behalf of the Downey Teachers Association,  
Donald LaPlante, Mark Morris and Willie Gutierrez,  
we would like to say a big THANK YOU  
for supporting us in our re-election efforts.

*We could not have done it without your support!*

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► New councilman Sean Ashton made his first appointment as a council member, appointing Patrick Owens to the Planning Commission, replacing Robert Kiefer, an appointee of teremed-out councilman Mario Guerra.

Owens was linked in 2014 to DowneyWatchdog.com, an attack site against Guerra. Ashton also appointed Owens' wife, Diana Owens, to the Recreation and Community Commission.

Patrick Owens blocked a Downey Patriot reporter on Facebook when asked to comment.

► "Road to Freedom," an exhibit of revolutionary art inspired by the Ukraine, opened at Stay Gallery.

► Downey was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its fiscal year 2014-15 budget.

► Jason Washington, the man accused of intentionally burning down the office building at Paramount Boulevard and 5th Street, accepted a plea deal and began serving a three-year prison sentence. Washington was arrested two days after the 7,400 sq. ft. office building went up in flames April 3, 2014, destroying several businesses and putting dozens of people out of work.

**Downey Education Association/CTA/NEA**  
11310 Firestone Boulevard  
Norwalk, CA 90650



**Jim Mogan**  
President

OFFICE: (562) 868-6251      FAX: (562) 868-6253  
EMAIL: [deapres@tri-cityed.org](mailto:deapres@tri-cityed.org)

► Serious crime in Downey dropped 14 percent since 2013, and 29 percent over the last four years, according to statistics released by the Downey Police Department.

FBI Index Crimes – classified as homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and vehicle theft – were down 14 percent in 2014 compared to 2013.

Since 2010, Downey has seen an overall reduction of 29 percent in these crimes.

The Downey Police Department attributed the crime reduction to several factors, including a revival of a neighborhood watch program. The department also credited the deployment of specialized crime details that is proactive in the community.

"Although overall crime statistics show a decline these past five years, the men and women of the Downey Police Department will continue their proactive enforcement efforts to ensure this positive trend continues," the department said.

► Kevin MacDonald, the longtime executive director of The Arc – Los Angeles and Orange Counties, announced he was leaving to take a new job with Westside Regional Center.

"It was one of the toughest decisions I ever had to make," said MacDonald. "But this gives me an opportunity to attack the disability field from a different angle. After 23 years, I asked myself, 'How can I make a greater impact?'"

► Downey Dance Center mourned the death of 7-year-old Raniyah Simmons, who died after suffering a severe asthma attack just moments before her first dance competition. Hundreds of people gathered at the dance center to pay tribute to Raniyah by wearing pink and releasing balloons with personal messages on them.

► Warren High beat rival Downey in the schools' PTSA membership competition.

The schools wagered that the PTSA president with the fewer number of new memberships would wear the opponent's school shirt to their meetings and volunteer events.

The contest was all in good fun, and helped both schools hit memberships over 500.

"With numbers like that, not sure anyone really lost," said Claudia Cano, second vice president and membership chair of the Warren High PTSA. "Thanks to all who participated. The city of Downey is very lucky to have such devoted alumni, family and friends."



*Happy Holidays*

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## February



▶ Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and 60 other L.A. County mayors met at the Columbia Memorial Space Center in Downey where they discussed public safety, immigration, housing and other regional issues.

“It was a great pleasure welcoming Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and other fellow mayors to our city, as it allowed the opportunity for us to interact and address issues that directly affect our communities,” said Downey Mayor Luis Marquez. “We were proud to host this event at our very own Columbia Memorial Space Center – a true gem in our city – and we were glad to have shared a little bit about what makes Downey special.”



▶ Downtown Downey bar and restaurant the Lock and Key Social Drinkery

participated in the 15th annual Dux in Tux fundraiser sponsored by the Anaheim Ducks, helping to raise more than \$350,000 for the NHL team’s foundation.



▶ Downey High’s wrestling team won the 2015 CIF Southern Section Western Division dual meet championship after defeating top-seeded San Marino in a nail-biter, 33-32.

▶ The Embassy Suites announced a multi-million dollar renovation of its Downey property. Upgrades included a new lobby, atrium, restaurant, lounge and meeting rooms.

▶ “Downey Doodle-icious,” a public art mural by Don Lamkin, was officially dedicated. The mural is located on the east side of the Porto’s Bakery parking structure.

▶ Re-elected Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia was sworn-in at the Columbia Memorial Space Center. California State Controller Betty Yee officiated.

▶ The Downey school board voted to move up the start of the 2015-16 school year to Aug. 26. The school year ends June 10, 2016.

▶ Downey Unified’s TLC Family Resource Center celebrated its 15th anniversary with a fundraising luncheon at the Rio Hondo Event Center.

▶ Hundreds of students gave up a Saturday morning to pack meals for families in the Philippines that are still struggling to recover from a devastating 2013 typhoon. Spearheaded by the KIWIN’s youth service club, students packed 25,000 meals and raised nearly \$6,000.

▶ Downey resident Barbara Lai was awarded the Sugiyama Human Service Award for her extensive volunteer work. Through her church, Lai is involved in numerous charitable efforts, including mission trips to Mexico. She and her husband have also served as foster parents to a special-needs child since infancy.

▶ Longtime volunteer Maria Larkin stepped down as chair of the Downey Chamber of Commerce’s Christmas Parade committee. Larkin chaired the committee for 14 years.

▶ Downey physician Dr. Alan Frischer completed the Huntington Beach Surf City Marathon with a time of 3 hours and 46 minutes, qualifying to run in the Boston Marathon next year.

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► CareMore donated 10 automated external defibrillators to the city of Downey, which were placed at strategic locations throughout the city for use on people who are unconscious and without pulse.

The defibrillators analyze the heart rhythm and advises the rescuer if a shockable rhythm is detected. If so, the defibrillator delivers a shock.

► Warren High boys and girls soccer teams each won the San Gabriel Valley League title. The boys team finished with an overall record of 20-2-2 while the girls compiled a 17-3-3 record.

► Downey High School's varsity cheer squad came in second place at the Dallas NCA Cheer Competition, missing out on first place by less than a point.

Squad members spent six months raising money to compete in the tournament, marking the first time a Downey High cheer team has competed out of California, school officials said. Twelve moms and three coaches chaperoned the team.

► Downey High School's jazz band made history, beating 10 top Southern California bands to win first place at the Western States Jazz Festival.

Downey competed in the Heavy Division, which is equivalent to the CIF Division 1. It was the school's first time winning first place in this division. Downey's second band won first place in the intermediate division, topping six other bands.

► "The Downey Overture," a piece of music written exclusively for Downey by Spanish composer Oscar Navarro, was performed at Carnegie Hall by the High School Honors Performance Band. They were conducted by Sharon Lavery, music director of the Downey Symphony.

► Freshman state Sen. Tony Mendoza, elected to office just two months prior, announced he was "seriously considering" running to replace Don Knabe on the L.A. County Board of Supervisors when Knabe is termed out in 2016. Mendoza dropped the idea shortly thereafter.

► The Downey Fire Department hired six new ambulance operators, including two women, who became the department's only female employees

assigned in emergency services on platoon duty.

► After nearly 40 years in business, Johnny & Co. announced its closure. Business owner Miguel Bardales said he and the property owner were unable to come to terms on a new lease.

► On a 4-1 vote, the Planning Commission agreed to subdivide the Albert Ball estate on Cherokee Drive into four lots, allowing the current property owner, Gloria Campuzano, to build four single-family homes on the site.

The original Ball mansion was demolished in 2007 with approval from the city's design review board, with the understanding that the home would be rebuilt to its original design.

The 2008 economic downturn, however, changed those plans.

"I hate to reward a situation that had an inappropriate demolition, in the sense that it was supposed to be rebuilt," said Commissioner Jim Rodriguez, who cast the dissenting vote. "But I have to admit that it's a lot where something has to be done."

About a half dozen residents and local preservationists spoke against the subdivision request, arguing that the new tract would go against the existing character of the neighborhood.

George Redfox, president of the Downey Conservancy, said the original home was historic and architecturally significant, including its front porch and columns.

Area residents also expressed concern that the four new homes, if they are two stories tall, would be out of character with the neighborhood, which mostly features single-level properties.

But after demolition, planning commissioners said there was little they could do to restore the property's historical significance.

"I don't think there's anything to save anymore," said Commissioner Matias Flores. "We have to put that property to use."

Campuzano, who also owns Gloria's Cocina Mexicana in Downey, said she often dreamt of living on the property.

"Whenever I passed by, I'd see this amazing land and say, 'one of these days, I'll buy it,'" she said. "Finally, last year it was for sale."

Campuzano, who purchased the land for nearly \$1.6 million, said she plans for her children and other relatives to live in all four lots.

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## March



► Downey Collection, the new community of three-story, solar-powered townhomes at Lakewood Boulevard and Gallatin Road, honored the late Lance Cpl. Joshua Whittle by naming its three private streets after the fallen Downey Marine.

Whittle served just three weeks in Afghanistan before he was killed in June 2009 after stepping on a landmine. He was 20 years old.

Now bright-blue signs labeled Joshua Way, Whittle Court, and Sunshine Place – Sunshine was Whittle’s nickname – line the once vacant roads. “It was just the right thing to do,” said Sam Choram, sales

manager for City Ventures, which developed the private community. “Everyone here knows, so every time they write their address down they think about the fallen Marine. It’s very meaningful, he is a hero.”

Whittle’s mother, Crystal Vincent, accepted a city resolution on behalf of her family, thankful that her son will be remembered.

“He’ll definitely live on forever, he’ll never be forgotten now,” Vincent said. “They honored him well, which he deserved. He was a great kid.”

► Daniel James Paul Sr., a 95-year-old Navy veteran who served in World War II, has long dreamed of riding onboard a fire engine. In March, the Downey




Fire Department made that dream come true.

Downey firefighters gave Paul a private tour of Fire Station No. 1, where he got a behind-the-scenes look at the fire station and got to try on real fire apparatus before going on a ridealong.

Accompanied by about a dozen family members, Paul also was presented a fire department badge and pin, along with a certificate from the city of Downey, thanking him for his service to the nation and community.

A Downey resident since 1977, Paul is a Past Master of the Downey Masonic Lodge, and still volunteers at CareMore’s hospice facility. “People sometimes ask my secret for living to 95. I guess it’s not so much what I did but what I didn’t do,” he said. I never smoked and I don’t drink much. The rest of it is a matter of luck.”


**ROGER C. BROSSMER**  
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**ALEX SAAB**  
Mayor



OFFICE: (562) 904-7274  
CELL: (562) 659-5957  
asaab@downeyca.org

**FERNANDO VASQUEZ**  
Mayor Pro Tem



11111 BROOKSHIRE AVENUE  
DOWNEY, CA 90241-7016  
fvasquez562@gmail.com

OFFICE (562) 904-7274  
fvasquez@downeyca.org

### THE SAAB FAMILY

*We are grateful for many things this year, especially for our family, health and our Downey community.*

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*

*Alex and Giggy  
Dominic, Gianna, and Alexander*




*“The Guerra Family wishes all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.”*



*We want to thank our community who came together in support of our DPD and the family of fallen Officer Ricky Galvez. The Guerra Family is proud to call Downey our home. Continued Blessings from the Guerra’s,  
Dn. Mario L. Ann, Mario II, Lynne, Matt, Haley, Ryan, Benny L. Porter.*

## Happy Holidays!



**Thank you, Downey, for the honor and privilege of allowing me to serve as your Mayor Pro Tem. Together we achieved many wonderful things in 2015, and I’m confident 2016 will be even better.**

*Fernando Vasquez*  
Mayor Pro Tem

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▶ Downey High School's cheer squad made history at the USA Spirit Nationals held at the Anaheim Convention Center, bringing home three first place trophies, a Vikings sweep. It was Downey High's first varsity title.



Downey High's nationally ranked cheer program is led by Leslie Patterson, who took over the program nine years ago along with assistant Natalie Flores and coach/choreographer Conner Huber.

▶ Morris Day and the Time performed a live concert at the Downey Theatre.

▶ Outdoor fitness equipment – donated by Downey Los Amigos Kiwanis – opened to the public at Furman Park.

▶ Vandals broke into Rio Hondo Elementary, smashing windows, stealing laptops and vandalizing the campus. Loss and damage was estimated at \$24,000.

▶ A retired LAPD detective living in Downey was arraigned on charges that he uploaded child pornography to the internet. Charles Henderson was allegedly in possession of more than 600 images of child pornography when he was arrested by Downey Police in 2014.

Henderson would plead no contest and received five years probation and 30 days of community service.

▶ Mayor Luis Marquez used his State of the City address to publicly identify several more restaurants confirmed for the Promenade at Downey development, including Mod Pizza, Lazy Dog Cafe, Jersey Mikes, Rock And Brews, and Gaucho Grill.

The mayor's other big announcement was that Downey had secured funding to finish street repairs on Lakewood Boulevard between Gallatin and Telegraph roads.

▶ Simplicity Bank, with a branch at Stonewood Center, was acquired by HomeStreet Bank.

▶ The Rancho Los Amigos Foundation held its 29th annual gala in support of Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center. Honorees included artist and former Rancho patient Carlos Benavides and Bank of America.

▶ An 80-girl delegation from the Downey Unified School District traveled to Cal Poly Pomona to participate in the college's Women in Engineering program. According to statistics, only 11.7 percent of engineering jobs are occupied by women.

▶ Downey and Warren high schools took the SkillsUSA Regional Competition by storm, bringing home a combined 41 gold medals, 30 silver medals and 36 bronze medals.

▶ A team of Warren High students traveled to Palo Alto last Saturday to compete in the 2015 Hewlett-Packard CodeWars. Warren was the only public school from Southern California to participate in the computer programming competition.

Warren High's team, which included Christopher Acosta, Judyong Cho and Daniel Alemu, solved 10 of the challenges, including some on the advanced level.

▶ A Warren High freshman was arrested after threatening on Instagram that he would shoot up the campus on March 20.

Police were able to quickly identify the student and arrested him on campus without incident. The student, who said he intended the post as a joke, was booked for making criminal threats and released to his parents.

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► It was confirmed that Downey would host Ireland for the Special Olympics World Games. "Hosting the Ireland delegation is even more special to us due to our city's history ties with Ireland, and our sister city relationship with Roscommon County, Ireland," said Mayor Luis Marquez.

► After 12 years of volunteering, John Fiorenza retired as bingo manager for the Knights of Columbus.

► Apollo Park's new walking trail officially opened to the public. Downey used a \$600,000 county grant to build the trail (a similar trail at Furman Park opened in November 2014 using the same grant money).

► A national study ranked Downey as the 14th most diverse economy in the country.

According to WalletHub, which conducted the study, researchers have found that cities with greater professional diversity show more productivity. Using data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, this particular study analyzed and ranked 350 of the largest cities in the U.S., focusing on three key metrics: industry, occupation, and worker-class diversity.

Downey was ranked 77th, 37th, and 110th in these categories respectively.

► Miguel Soto, coach of Downey High's wrestling team, was named Coach of the Year by the Long Beach Press-Telegram.

► Students from Downey and Warren high schools competed in a pizza-eating contest to raise money for the TLC Family Resource Center. The fundraiser was organized by Warren High's Stay Connected club.

► Competing against 115 schools, St. Raymond School's academic decathlon team brought home four medals from the Los Angeles Archdiocese Academic Junior High Decathlon held at the L.A. Sports Arena.

► An appearance by two professional skateboarders shut down Stonewood Center after thousands of teens swarmed the mall.

Steven Fernandez, 15, and Keelan Dadd, 26, were scheduled to be at the Zumiez store from 1-4 p.m. The business only planned to accommodate 300 people, but more than 2,000 teens showed up, the Downey Police Department said.

Fans started rushing inside the clothing store after they were turned away, trying to get a glimpse of Fernandez, who goes by the nickname "Baby Scumbag."

With help from the L.A. County Sheriff's Department (including a helicopter) and neighboring agencies, Downey Police dispersed the crowd and closed the mall for several hours.

The shopping center reopened at about 4:30 p.m. though some retailers and restaurants remained closed after they had sent their employees home for the day.

► The City Council reluctantly but unanimously voted to roll back its residency restrictions on registered sex offenders after the state Supreme Court ruled that similar restrictions in San Diego County were unconstitutional.

State law already prohibits sex offenders from living within 2,000 feet of parks and schools. In 2009, Downey went a step further by creating "residential exclusion zones" that also barred sex offenders from living near childcare centers and the library.

Such restrictions could be challenged in court and Downey would likely lose based on recent court decisions, warned city attorney Yvette Abich Garcia.

On March 2, the state Supreme Court ruled that similar restrictions in San Diego County were unconstitutional because it barred sex offenders from 97 percent of the available housing in the county.

Critics had also argued that the restrictions forced sex offenders into homelessness, making it more difficult for law enforcement to track their locations and activities.

► After a four-year hiatus, athletic programs returned to Downey middle schools. Superintendent Dr. John Garcia tossed the first pitch at opening ceremonies hosted by Griffiths Middle School.

► Warren High teacher Alison Kirby was named "Woman of the Year" by Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia.

Kirby has worked at Warren High School as an English teacher for six years but her day doesn't end when the bell rings. She has taken on the role of Link Crew advisor, a transition program

that welcomes freshmen and makes them believe that students can help students succeed.

She is also an advisor for the Ladies Leadership Club, a club dedicated to empowering young women through mentorship, political engagement and educational opportunities, and is cheer coach and ASB class advisor.

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## April



► Alexis Gomez was crowned Miss Downey at the Downey Rose Float Association's 61st annual Miss Downey Pageant on March 21 at the Downey Theatre.

Her court includes Lauren Martinez, Cristal Meza, Haley Griffith and Krystal Serna. Danielle Padilla was crowned Miss Teen Downey. Teen princesses include Tyler Garcia, Aveonna Bobbit, and Katin Cedarholm.

The title of Junior Miss Downey went to Darlene Monzon. Her court includes Ciera Gaitan, Ashley Rojas, and Brittany Jimenez.

Alyssa Mayer was crowned Little Miss Downey. Little princesses include Lainee Rhodes and Czarina Kinshasa.

► The Columbia Memorial Space Center hosted its first "City of STEM Week," coordinating a week-long program of space- and science-related activities.

► Hao Zhou, an 18-year-old violin master, performed a solo concerto to close out the Downey Symphony's 57th season.

► The Downey Police Department purchased a portable security system for use by residents when they are having their homes fumigated. The security system is free to borrow but reservations are necessary.

► Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center announced plans for a major \$418 million renovation.

The project will include the construction of a new Wellness and Aquatic Therapy Center, outpatient facilities and inpatient expansion to improve seismic safety. Many of the campus's older buildings will also be demolished, however the hospital's historic Harriman Building will be refurbished and protected during the process.

The project will be separated into two phases of construction.

"It is going to be a very difficult time ahead," said Andrea Avila, field deputy for L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe. "There's going to be some changes coming along for the staff, our patients and the community, but in the end it's going to be a great project. We know we change a lot of lives now but we can just imagine for generations to come what Rancho is going to stand for and what they're going to represent."

► Warren High's Maggie Gomez was named Youth of the Year by the Rio Hondo Boys and Girls Club.

► Residents used a town hall forum hosted by Councilman Sean Ashton to complain about the poor condition of Downey's streets. "Fixing the streets is a priority, but we don't have the dollars. I know it's not the answer you want to hear," said Councilman Roger Brossmer, who also was in attendance.

► The fourth annual Chalk Festival was held at Warren High.

► Stauffer Middle School's band earned three trophies – Drum Major, Color Guard and Sweepstakes – after performing in San Juan Capistrano's 57th annual Swallows' Day Parade. The band is directed by Todd Miller.

► Stauffer Middle School was one of 12 schools chosen nationwide to pilot a new computer science course from Project Lead the Way where teachers and students use tablet devices to infuse mobile technology into the classroom. Tri Tansopalucks is teaching the pilot course after attending training in Indianapolis.

► An exhibit featuring the work of Brazilian photographer Virginia Maria Yunes opened at Stay Gallery.

► Three Downey teachers were chosen for an education fellowship overseas.

Warren High's Tiffani Bowen and Lisa Mistrik traveled to Austria, Slovakia and Switzerland to study the effects of music as a psychological therapy in working with students with autism and other special needs.

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## Continued

Daniel Kim, an AP environmental science teacher at Downey High, traveled to Costa Rica to explore the flora and fauna of the marine coastal and rain forest biodomes to create more tangible and relevant learning tools for his students.

► Soroptimist International of Downey honored five inspiring women at an awards breakfast. Honorees included Jackie Pardo, a teacher and club advisor at Warren High, who was honored with the Soroptimist Ruby Award; and four Women of Distinction: Blanca Rochin, Lupe Rodriguez, Nancy Swenson and Patricia Russell-Rohrer.

► A record 26 DUSD students brought home gold medals at the SkillsUSA state competition this past weekend in San Diego. Last year, seven DUSD students earned gold at the same competition.

“This final outcome is a true testament to the hard work and focus that our teachers and students put in throughout the entire year,” said Phil Davis, Downey Unified’s CTE and STEM director. “This year’s medal count far exceeded any other year.”

► Downey residents Elisa and Edward Duran won the “Showcase Showdown” on an episode of “The Price is Right.” The couple’s total prize package was valued at \$38,163 and included

a new Toyota Tacoma pick-up truck with lifetime paint repair; four days and three nights in Dallas, Tex. with a VIP package to the Country Music Awards; a 50-CD collection of everyone nominated for a Country Music Award; a two-day trip to Las Vegas; matching his and hers Honda motorcycles (with helmets); his and hers Italian leather jackets; and a surround sound system.

► Starbucks submitted plans to open two new locations in Downey: a walk-up cafe at the southeast corner of Imperial Highway and Bellflower, and a standalone restaurant at the southwest intersection of Imperial and Paramount Boulevard.

► Vazza Cafe, a coffee cart offering frappes, chai lattes and other coffeehouse staples, opened at the Downey City Library on a pilot basis.

► MMA fighter Tito Ortiz visited Warren High’s campus to share his life story. Ortiz became the face of mixed martial arts in the late 1990s, winning his first UFC fight in 1997 in 31 seconds.

► Former Downey mayor Bob Winningham died after a long battle with cancer. He was 59.

► Vallarta Supermarket received approval from the city to significantly remodel the former Beach’s Market property at Imperial Highway and Paramount Boulevard.

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Plans for the remodeling will enlarge the currently vacant building to provide more floor area, with the addition of a new truck loading area also included. Currently the building stands at 20 feet high with more than 37,750 square feet of floor area. After the enlargements, the building will have been extended over 25 feet southward and have an added 20 feet in height.

The building’s architecture is also being altered to reflect the Hispanic community that the Vallarta Supermarkets cater to.

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## May

- ▶ Downey's Ben Gutierrez cycled from San Francisco to Los Angeles for a fundraiser benefiting HIV and AIDS education.
- ▶ Former Warren High running back Jesse Callier received an invitation to the Seattle Seahawks' rookie mini-camp. Callier was a three-year starter for the Bears during the 2007-2009 seasons, accumulating 6,529 rushing yards on 816 carries.
- ▶ The Water Replenishment District of Southern California agreed to pay Downey and three other cities \$9.1 million to settle claims that it violated Proposition 218. The settlement came after nearly five years of litigation between WRD and the cities of Downey, Cerritos, Signal Hill, and Bellflower, who alleged the district broke Prop 218 procedural requirements when determining a rate for pumping groundwater.
- ▶ Downey and Warren high schools were awarded the highest level of accreditation possible by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Both comprehensive high schools were awarded Six-Year Accreditation Status, illustrating "compelling evidence that there is little, if any, additional support needed for high-quality student learning."
- ▶ Albertson's was named Large Business of the Year by the Downey Chamber of Commerce, and Minuteman Press won Small Business of the Year. Other honorees included Joanna Peterson of Gallatin Dental as Director of the Year, and MaryAnn Sourial of the Downey Patriot as Volunteer of the Year.

- ▶ For the second consecutive year, Old River Elementary won the Carnival of Champions track and field exhibit. Rio San Gabriel finished second, followed by Price.
- ▶ L.A. County District Attorney Jackie Lacey honored Downey resident Connie Tejada for helping prevent a possible sexual assault. On the morning of Sept. 12, 2013, Tejada was at an Alhambra coffee shop when Frank Hernandez, a 66-year-old registered sex offender who was on parole at the time, forced himself into the car of the 24-year-old female victim. Hernandez took the victim's cell phone and pistol whipped her with what seemed to be a handgun. Tejada interrupted the assault and chased Hernandez away, even taking pictures of his vehicle.
- ▶ Warren High and Doty Middle School were two of 373 California schools to earn gold ribbons for demonstrating "exemplary achievements in implementing state standards in priority program areas."
- ▶ Warren High boys golf, swim and tennis teams won San Gabriel Valley League titles. The boys volleyball team and girls softball team were co-champions with Gahr. The tennis team would go on to win its first CIF championship.
- ▶ The Downey Unified School District was awarded a \$6 million grant as part of a state effort to train students for jobs in high-demand fields, such as health care, advanced manufacturing, information technology and software development.

"The Career Technical Education program in Downey Unified currently consists of 12 very robust pathways that prepare students to be college and career ready. This...grant will allow us to create numerous internship and externship opportunities," said Phil Davis, CTE and STEM director for DUSD. "Additionally, we plan to develop three new pathways that will help meet the needs of an ever-changing job market. Bottom line, we want our students to have the competitive edge when they graduate from our schools, whether they plan to go directly to college or start a career."

▶ Dr. Robert Jagielski was named principal of Sussman Middle School, effective the following school year. Jagielski had been DUSD's Director of Student Services since 2005. Before that he was vice principal and assistant principal at Downey High.

- ▶ Jill King, Robert Mallory, Grant Warhurst and Gale Mejico were named "Teachers of the Year" by Downey United Masonic Lodge 220.
  - ▶ Classic rock group Starship performed at the Downey Civic Theatre.
  - ▶ Giant RV and BevMo were seriously considering opening locations in Downey, the Patriot reported. Giant RV submitted applications to open a showroom at the former Gemco and World of Decor site at Florence Avenue and Studebaker Road, while BevMo was in negotiations to open at 8530 Firestone Blvd.
- Giant RV's plans were later approved by the Planning Commission. BevMo's negotiations with the property owner fell through.



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► More than two dozen community leaders were honored as Volunteers of the Year by the Downey Coordinating Council.

Honorees included Carol Veatch (American Business Women's Association), Margery Lewis (Assistance League of Downey), Carolina Estrada-Del Toro (Downey Arts Coalition), Joanna Peterson (Downey Chamber of Commerce), Jaclyn Guido (Downey City Library), Cleola Brown (Downey Coordinating Council), Jean Fiddler (Downey Family YMCA), Emely Lopez (Downey Federal Credit Union), Frank Williams (Downey Historical Society), Rosa Orozco (Downey Lions Club), Matt Santisteven (Downey Rose Float Assoc.), Armando Juarez-Gonzalez (Downey Sister Cities), Mark Keller (Downey Symphony Guild), Don Marshall (Downey Symphonic Society), Steve Sedano (Downey TLC Family Resource Center), Ann Hutchinson (Downey United Methodist Church), Roy Beard (Emergency Preparedness Committee), Sandy Bujanda (Food Helps), Cleo Latimer (Friends of the Downey City Library), Ray Mesler (Gangs Out of Downey), Cummins Pacific Team (Keep Downey Beautiful), Bill Johnson (OLPH Women's Guild), Donna and George Boose (PTA HELPS), Claudia De Leon-Camarena (Soroptimist International of Downey), Betty Morse (The Arc - Los Angeles and Orange Counties), Patricia Martinez (Woman's Club of Downey).

► Downey extended its theater management contract with VenueTech an additional three years.

► The Planning Commission approved an 18,000-sq.-ft. development at the former Downey Ford site. Known as The Commons at Gallatin Road., the development will include a Golden Corral along with three smaller restaurants.

## DOWNEY AUTHOR PENS NOVEL CHRONICLING LIFE OF UNDOCUMENTED DEPORTEES IN MEXICO

**Author Christian Brown**

Author Eric Z. Weintraub always knew he wanted to tell stories, but when the Downey resident signed up for a college course on immigrant America, he surprisingly found his voice.

"We learned about Ellis Island and current events, basically the rough stuff our country has done to undocumented immigrants," Weintraub said. "I wanted to write a book that showed undocumented Americans aren't a political issue, but people trying to build a life like everyone else."

After years of research, travel, and plenty of creative writing, 25-year-old Weintraub has released his first novella "Dreams of an American Exile," a fictional tale that follows the fate of undocumented immigrants who are deported back to Mexico.

"Dreams of an American Exile" primarily tells the story of Rose Quintero, an undocumented college senior who is deported to the Mexican border town of Nogales from Tucson, Arizona. Now back in the country her parents once fled when she was a baby, Quintero seeks for a way to survive the streets and return to the U.S. Weintraub believes the character is relatable and

portrays the insecurities, fears, and harsh repercussions undocumented Americans endure.

"She had to be Latina and I wanted her to be a college student," he said.

"With an audience, you want to give people things they can latch on to as quickly as possible -- as a girl, Rose, would have a few more vulnerabilities as opposed to a male protagonist."

Although the novella may be fictional, the stories detailed in Weintraub's book are not fairy tales.

In 2012, he began a three-year-long process of researching and writing the short story. With a \$3,000 grant from the Summer Undergraduate Research Fund at his alma mater the University of Southern California, Weintraub traveled to Tijuana and Nogales in Mexico and Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona to speak with undocumented workers, deportees, border patrol agents, and humanitarians.

Speaking with people on both sides of the debate, Weintraub crafted a series of short stories.

"Writing a fiction was best for me and actually there's not a lot of fiction on this topic," he said. "I wanted to write

something I would want to read."

"Dreams of an American Exile" won the inaugural Plaza Literary Prize and was awarded publishing by the Orange County-based company 1888 Center this fall, but the project hasn't been Weintraub's only passion.

The son of an award-winning TV news cameraman and an accomplished freelance producer, Weintraub's first love was filmmaking. Currently, he assists his mother as producer of The Storyboard Project, a web-based series that tells the stories of Los Angeles homeless youth.

"The stories -- that's what draws me into it," he said.

With buzz around his book increasing, Weintraub isn't slowing down, but is now working on his second book, a collection of short stories on illegal immigration and undocumented workers.

"I hope people learn something out of it -- there are 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country -- these are real people," he said. "Go on Rose's journey. It's an intimate view of something that isn't just a Latino issue, it's an American issue."

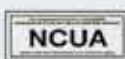


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## DOWNEY MAN FIGHTS OFF WEST NILE VIRUS

Author **Alex Dominguez**

Downey resident Eddie Hernandez, 49, knew something wasn't right when he left work one day.

"I went to work and I didn't feel like 100 percent," said Hernandez. "I just felt weird; I felt out of it."

A day or so prior, Hernandez had been working in his backyard when he felt several insect bites after holes in a garden hose caused water to spray upwards. Hernandez disregarded what he believed to be spider bites.

However, Hernandez had in fact been bitten by a mosquito, and the odd feeling he was experiencing when leaving work was the beginning of his bout with West Nile virus.

West Nile Virus is an arthropod-borne disease that is most commonly transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, only about 1-5 people who contract the disease will develop a fever and other symptoms such as head and body aches, joint pains, vomiting and diarrhea. Of these, most will have a full recovery however can remain weak and fatigued for weeks after. Less than one percent of those will suffer serious and sometimes fatal neurological illness.

At the time that this article was written, the California Department of Public Health stated that there have been 266 cases of West Nile Virus due to mosquitoes in Los Angeles County this year.

According to Hernandez, he suffered from a "zombie-like" state, and neurologically was not right. He sought medical attention and hospital care, but Hernandez wasn't satisfied when he was released by medical staff.

"I seriously felt like a zombie; I wasn't all there," said Hernandez. "I heard about this bio-magnetism therapy...that was out in San Diego."

After his first session with this new therapy, Hernandez says that he no longer felt in a "zombie state," however his strength has still yet to completely return.

Now, Hernandez hopes that people will see his experience and use it to stay healthy.

"Be totally aware of any standing water; any standing water they see they should sweep it up...that's where mosquitoes accumulate," said Hernandez. "Listen to your body...you'll feel it."

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## June

► KNX-1070 broadcasted live from Porto's Bakery. The all-day broadcast included interviews with city leaders and civic groups.

► Six alumni were inducted into Downey High's Hall of Fame: Alida Bouris, Yanna Bouris, Michael Kearns, Larry Myers, Grant Neilan and Bob Winningham.

► Barns and Noble donated a large cache of books – valued at \$4,300 – to Columbus High School.

► Facing mandatory water restrictions from the state of California, the Downey City Council this week adopted sweeping regulations limiting water usage at homes and businesses.

► KB Home received city approval to build a sprawling housing development on the former Gallatin Medical Center site on Paramount Boulevard.

The 6 1/2-acre complex will feature 117

three-story townhomes on three separate lots between 5th and 7th streets. Once construction is complete, KB Home will subdivide the acreage into 120 individual lots so each future owner will not only own their building, but the underlying land as well.

Three floor plans range from two-four bedrooms, with living area options starting at 1,750 sq. ft. and go up to 2,215 sq. ft. Plans call for three common lots, which will incorporate driveways, covered seating areas, a tot lot, landscape areas, and 69 open parking spaces for guests.

► The City Council unanimously passed a \$164.3 million operating budget for fiscal year 2015-16. The lion's share of the budget -- 65 percent -- was allocated to the police and fire departments, although approximately \$2.4 million was set aside for various capital improvement projects, including a new air conditioning system and bathroom renovations at the Downey Civic Theatre. The police department would maintain its current level of 111 sworn police officers

heading into 2016. But Police Chief Carl Charles cautioned that more officers will be needed in the coming years, particularly when the Promenade shopping center opens.

► Fifty-six students received their diplomas from Downey Adult School, including 15 GEDs and 41 high school diplomas. The average age of graduating students was 25.

► The Downey Unified School District reported a 93 percent graduation rate, higher than any other year.

► Rick Rodriguez was sworn-in as president of Gangs Out of Downey.

► Joseph Del Rio, a Purple Heart recipient from Downey, was honored by the Los Angeles Dodgers during pre-game ceremonies.

► Crime novelists Christopher J. Lynch and Jill Amadio headed up an authors panel at the Rio Hondo Event Center.

► Cindy Kovach was installed as president of the Downey Chamber of Commerce.

► The Downey Kiwanis Foundation awarded \$60,000 in college scholarships to 33 students and three teachers.

► For the second consecutive year, Doty Middle School won the Downey Unified School District's middle school track and field championships.

► Stauffer Middle School's yearbook staff won a national award for its yearbook, "Spartan Evolution."

► Calvary Chapel Christian High School senior Aaron Gutierrez earned a full, four-year scholarship from Cal State Long Beach valued at \$58,000.

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# WAS TARZAN REALLY BANNED IN DOWNEY?

**Author Donald McCormick**

In the early 1960's it was reported that the Downey City Library had banned all of Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan" books because Tarzan wasn't married to Jane when they conceived Boy.

This was widely believed throughout southern California during the 1960's and 1970's and is still believed by many today. This rumor implied that the people of Downey were ignorant, intolerant, right-wing prigs.

This belief has surprising staying power. Over 45 years after this ban was supposed to have happened, the 2007 book "Tarzan: The Broadway Adventure" by Michael Lassell claimed that a national ban of Tarzan books started in Downey in 1962.

Almost 10 years after the "ban," the Los Angeles Times still considered it newsworthy. In May 8, 1970, the popular Los Angeles Times columnist Jack Smith wrote "Downey Sends L.A. Back to the Bush League." In it, he stated, "Wasn't it Downey, a few years ago, that tried to get the Tarzan books out of the town library on the grounds that Tarzan and Jane were living together but weren't married? Yes, it was Downey."

Ray Loynd's September 8, 1971 Los Angeles Times article, "Stage Review: Downey Guild Offers 'Evening of Theater'" (see p. H9) called Downey "a community that is capable of banning Tarzan from the public library."

The rumor about Tarzan was, however, a wild exaggeration of what actually happened. According to a Dec. 28, 1961 Los Angeles Times article, "Zane Grey Also Safe: Tarzan's Marital Status No Issue as Downey School Ban Is Denied," a rumor spread that one of the Downey elementary schools had removed Edgar Rice Burroughs and Zane Grey books from its library because "1—There was no indication that Tarzan and his mate, Jane, were ever married before they took up housekeeping in the treetops," and "2—Grey was known to put such expletives as 'damn!' and 'hell' in the mouths of his western cowhands."

In a later article, ("Downey Furor Result: Schools Take Over Control of Libraries," Los Angeles Times, Jan. 6 1962) the Times explained that the superintendent of the Downey Unified School District heard this rumor and investigated the situation to find out what happened.

He discovered that there was no "ban." What had happened was that in one elementary school, a parent had put two Zane Grey books "out of site in a desk drawer." No Tarzan books were involved.

The Zane Grey books were subsequently put back on the shelves.


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## July



- ▶ Police arrested a 30-year-old transient after he allegedly broke into a home and got into bed with the female resident. Arturo Duarte was linked to the crime by fingerprints left at the scene.
- ▶ The Downey Police Department's two canines, Dash and Dani, received bullet-proof vests purchased by community donations.
- ▶ Dr. Manuel Chon, an OBGYN, and Dr. Bala Venugopal, a pediatrician, were named Attending Physicians of the Year. Both doctors practice out of Pioneer Medical Group's Downey office and are educators in PIH Health Hospital Downey's Family Medicine Residency Program.
- ▶ The City Council agreed to sell .42 acres of city-owned land to Habitat for Humanity for the construction of seven new townhomes. The homes will be located at 9303-09 Elm Vista Drive.
- ▶ The Downey City Library hosted its first ever "Mini Comic Con," featuring vendors, games, artists, a game truck, and a food truck.
- ▶ The City Council approved a bicycle master plan, a 400-page document which will serve as a long-term blueprint for reduced traffic congestion and improved resident health through cycling.

## FOR TOD CORRIN, COMMUNITY SERVICE IS A HABIT

**W**hat makes Downey a special community? Good schools, our own police and fire departments, and citizens that take an active role in their community.

Tod Corrin is one such citizen.

Corrin was elected to the Downey board of education in 2003, but his community service starts much earlier than that. In 1961, he became a YMCA Blue Ragger as a 12-year-old camper at Camp Bluff Lake. He volunteered selling Christmas tees for the YMCA in 1967, and while attending college in 1968, he taught swim lessons and was a YMCA lifeguard. He was the lifeguard at Camp Round Meadow during the summers of 1970 and 1971.

After graduating from Oregon's Louis & Clark College in 1972 with a bachelor's in Psychology, Corrin moved to Downey and began as a program director at the Downey YMCA. A short time later, he was promoted to senior program director and oversaw several camps, including High Sierra Base Camp, High Sierra Caravan, Girls Caravan, and Camp Whittle.

In 1973, Corrin started Easter Caravan, and 43 years later, the program continues under his directorship. More than 2,200 kids and 400 staff leaders have benefited from the positive Christian values and camping experience Corrin has instilled in the Easter Caravan program.

That same year, Corrin began serving on the Downey YMCA Christmas tree lot, and he continues to serve as its chairman for the past 30 years.

In addition to the YMCA, Corrin has been a member of the Downey Los Amigos Kiwanis club since 1984. He has also served as president and player agent for Northwest Downey Little League, and is a 20-year member of PTA.

- ▶ An Irish delegation totaling 130 athletes, coaches and trainers arrived in Downey to take part in the Special Olympics World Games. As an official host city, Downey provided lodging, transportation, practice facilities, and hospitality.

The delegation stayed at the Embassy Suites during their three-night stay, and were treated to a private tour of the Coca-Cola factory, a trip to the Columbia Memorial Space Center, a dinner and dance at the Rio Hondo Event Center, and a welcome concert in the civic center.

Team Ireland would go on to earn 82 medals in the World Games, including 26 gold medals.

- ▶ Planet Fitness received approval to open a 16,000 sq. ft. gym at the former Lincoln-Mercury dealership at the southwest intersection of Lakewood Boulevard and Gallatin Road. The gym will occupy the dealership's former parts department, which has been vacant since the dealership closed in 2009.

- ▶ Illegal fireworks were blamed for igniting several fires in Downey, including a blaze at 9202 Chaney Ave. Investigators said airborne fireworks ignited the home's wood-shake roof, sending flames into the attic. The home's family was displaced.



# August



▶ Downey Fire Department Engine 61 crosses the Golden Gate Bridge on its way home from battling a wildfire in Humboldt County.

“After a week of wildland firefighting in Northern California’s Humboldt County, Downey Engine 61 and Strike Team XLG-1261-A have been demobilized today and are returning home,” the department posted on Facebook. “Check out this photo of Engine 61 crossing the Golden Gate bridge this afternoon! Great work by our firefighters!”



▶ The Downey YMCA held its first “Battle of the Businesses,” a friendly competition in which local businesses and clubs competed in bowling, miniature golf, volleyball and other events. Downey Federal Credit Union was the winner.

▶ Embassy Suites wrapped up a \$5 million renovation of its public areas.

▶ The L.A. Times published a profile on Downey that referred to the city as “the Mexican Beverly Hills.” Reaction to the article was mixed.

▶ A petition called for the L.A. County animal shelter in Downey (not to be confused with SEACA) to clean up its act, after photos emerged of filthy conditions in its kennels.

▶ Ambassadors from an English training center in Shanghai, China, toured Gallatin Elementary to learn about Downey Unified’s implementation of Character Counts.

▶ Hundreds of residents attended a town hall meeting hosted by Mayor Pro Tem Alex Saab at the Columbia Memorial Space Center.

▶ The Filharmonic, best known for their performances in “Pitch Perfect 2” and NBC’s “The Sing Off,” headlined a concert at the Downey Civic Theater. The event was sponsored by the Warren High School choral department with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the vocal program.

▶ The Patriot reported that Marriott was in negotiations to open a SpringHill Suites hotel on city-owned property next to Dunkin’ Donuts.

▶ Conservationists launched a last-minute effort to save a Victorian home at 9306 Gallatin Rd. Their efforts were unsuccessful as the property was demolished.

▶ L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe was scrutinized after the L.A. Daily News reported he was having his vehicle washed 2-3 times per week despite public pleas for “aggressive water conservation measures.”

▶ Tim and Barbara Hill, parents of seven children and active community volunteers, were named Parents of the Year for Downey.

▶ Downey Calvary Chapel returned to 8-man football for the 2015 season.

# WALMART NOT RECEIVING A WARM WELCOME IN DOWNEY

Author Alex Dominguez

August saw the official announcement of the arrival of a Walmart store in Downey, which is planned to be the anchor store within the new Promenade at Downey taking over the former Downey Studios location.

When replying to a resident on his public Facebook page, Ashton said, “The decision to put in a Walmart was made long before I decided to run for city council... As a former employee of the Walmart Company, I don’t believe that putting a Walmart store in the Promenade was in the best interests of the city of Downey.”

The official announcement came from Mayor Pro Tem Alex Saab at a town hall meeting held at the Columbia Memorial Space Center.

Saab was sympathetic to those who were displeased by his announcement, however, was unable to give the answer that many were wanting to hear.

It was not long after the announcement was made that many community members voiced their concern and opposition to the city’s future addition. A petition was even created on change.org, gaining more than 570 supporters.

“If people want to voice their concerns I encourage them to voice their concerns toward the developer as well as to Walmart. As a city there is very little we can do; actually there is nothing we can do to prevent this project... [Hypothetically] We can vote 5-0 tomorrow to not have Walmart in our city and it would still move forward... I hear everyone’s concerns, but there’s nothing we can do. We don’t have any control over that. It’s a private development; it’s a business decision between the developer and Walmart.”

On the petition’s page, Walmart was described as “...an attractive place for some of the most oddball people around...we want a store that will embellish our neighborhood and community, not cheapen it. Walmart is not going to bring clientele to Benihana or upscale restaurants...Walmart is synonymous with ‘cheap;’ not just inexpensive.”

Walmart closed its Pico Rivera location earlier in the year due to unspecified “plumbing problems.” According to City Manager Gilbert Livas, Downey attempted to secure other big box retailers, but with the presence of Target, Costco, and Lowe’s in neighboring cities already, options were limited.

Councilman Sean Ashton also voiced his displeasure with the arrival of the infamous store chain.

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# PAGING DR. FRISCHER



Author **Dr. Alan Frischer**

The end of another year is approaching. At this time, I like to sit back and reflect on my successes and failures over the past year. It is an ideal chance to ask, "Why am I doing this?"

Many may answer that this is just what we do to get through each day; to pay our bills and fulfill society's expectations. Yet, on a higher level, we feel a greater calling to do something meaningful with our lives. What is a successful life?

Bessie Anderson Stanley wrote a poem in 1904 in response to that very question. In the version that I quote here, liberties have been taken with a

few of the words, but I think that her message comes through beautifully:

**One has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much;  
Who has gained the respect of intelligent people and the love of little children;  
Who has filled a niche and accomplished a meaningful task;  
Who has lived a life filled with good deeds and so has left the world a better place, whether by an improved community or a rescued soul;  
Who has not lacked appreciation for Earth's beauty or failed to express it;  
Who has always looked for the best in others;  
Whose life was an inspiration;  
and whose memory will always be a blessing.**

I wish you all a healthy, happy, and "successful" new year.

*Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and former chief of medicine at Downey Regional Medical Center. Write to him in care of this newspaper at 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240.*

# Kiwanis Club of Downey

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# KIWANIS Club of Downey

## A YEAR IN REVIEW...

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### Community Project and Events

- Christmas at Las Casita's
- ARC Walk
- Rancho Los Amigos Annual Carnival
- Key Leader
- Rancho Los Amigos Pediatric Monthly Barbecue
- Scholarship Luncheon (Local HS)
- Kiwanis One Day
- Compton Initiative
- Pediatric Trauma Prevention

### Youth Sponsored Clubs

- Aktion Club (The ARC)
- Kiwin's (Downey HS)
- Key Club (Downey HS)
- Key Club (Lakewood HS)
- K Kids (Rio San Gabriel Elementary School)
- Kiwin's (St. Pius X / St. Matthias Academy)
- 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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**Blanca Pacheco**  
Attorney At Law



Office: 562.861.6001  
Fax: 562.861.5001  
E-Mail: bp@blancapacheco.esq.com  
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**September**



▶ Abner Mares, a featherweight boxer from Downey, lost a 12-round decision to Leo Santa Cruz in an action-packed fight at Staples Center that was televised nationally on ESPN. Before the fight, Mares was presented a key to the city by Mayor Luis Marquez.

▶ German grocery chain Aldi confirmed it was looking to open a store in Downey by mid-2016. The proposed location is on Lakewood Boulevard, just south of Firestone Boulevard.

▶ Downey was thrust into national news after video of a wild brawl outside Buffalo Wild Wings went viral.

▶ A developer reached a deal to purchase a city parking lot downtown where it would construct new housing. The City Council agreed to sell the lot at 8132 3rd St. to the Olson Company for \$700,000. The Olson Company was already in escrow for land at the southwest corner of 3rd Street and La Reina Avenue, and planned to combine the lots.

▶ Glennfest Film Festival returned to Downey for the fourth year, featuring free screenings of 16 art and indie films at various locations throughout the city.

▶ Mayor Pro Tem Alex Saab called for “sound and reasonable policy” to protect Downey’s historical properties. “It’s long overdue we had this discussion,” he said.

▶ Downey High student Sabrina Claros was named the winner of Congresswoman Lucile Roybal-Allard’s Congressional Student Art Competition.

▶ Thousands attended Downey’s International Food and Music Festival downtown.

▶ Downey High mourned the death of student Joshua Figueroa, who took his own life. He was 16.

▶ Downey resident Trisha Chopin pleaded not guilty to charges that she embezzled \$1.2 million from a real estate management company. Prosecutors accused Chopin of embezzling the money while working in the payroll department and using the money on “lavish vacations” and personal expenses.

▶ Citing high costs and dubious public benefits, the Downey City Council scrapped preliminary plans to install free wireless internet downtown and at Furman Park.

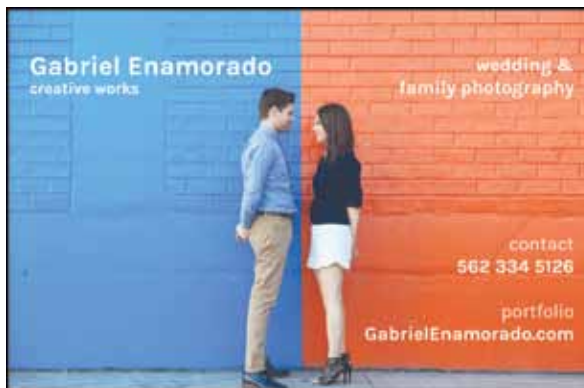
▶ Nicole Boyle began as girls volleyball coach at Downey High, taking over from longtime coach Andrea Sims.

▶ A carjacking that began in Pico Rivera came to a deadly end at Chris and Pitt’s Barbeque restaurant.

Eddie Tapia, 41, reportedly carjacked a woman at gunpoint before leading law enforcement officers on a pursuit. CHP officers performed a PIT maneuver on Tapia’s vehicle on Lakewood Boulevard, sending the vehicle out of control.

Tapia exited the car, fired two shots into the air, and sprinted into Chris and Pitt’s, barricading himself with several hostages.

The standoff came to an end several hours later when SWAT officers entered the building and fatally shot Tapia. No hostages were injured.



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# DOWNEY HIGH STUDENTS REACHING NEW HEIGHTS UNDER GLENN YAMASAKI

Author **Alex Dominguez**

The next generation of engineers is currently being groomed at Downey High School, and it's all thanks to state-of-the-art technology and the tutelage of engineering teacher Glenn Yamasaki.

Yamasaki got his degree in Aerospace engineering from Northrop University, however, circumstances in the industry at the time of his commencement led him in a different direction.

"I graduated in '91, and that's when all the industry kind of collapsed here in California," said Yamasaki. "That's when I got into teaching, and it just seemed like a very natural fit."

The building that houses Yamasaki's program officially opened in August of 2014. Inside, state-of-the-art technology provides students with hands-on opportunities in engineering education. The entire space is set up to simulate a real-world business, including various labs, an auto shop, and a conference room for meetings; the bathroom even includes a working shower, according to one student.

"We're exploding with engineering over here right now with our Project Lead the Way," said Yamasaki. "We do everything from 3-D modeling on the computers, the kids are doing basic machinery. Now we've taken it to the next level with different types of robotics teams we're going with...the list is tremendously long."

Students are almost treated more like employees in their current setting, even requiring name badges to enter. "I know what it's gonna take for these kids to be successful when they go on, so it's a 'beyond the textbook' type of thing," said Yamasaki. "I just look at like, 'If I were still on the job site and I wanted to design this or I was an engineer, what would I need?' That's how I do things with these kids."

Much of the equipment that Yamasaki's students use was acquired through grants and "going out into the industry and asking" and partnering with companies in the real engineering world.

According to Yamasaki, he personally has around 120 to 140 students in his engineering classes. Of those students, about half choose to participate in extracurricular activities within the program, including competing in robotics

and engineering competitions. The engineering program at Downey has produced several champions on a regional, state, and even national level.

Some of Yamasaki's students followed him from Warren, where he used to teach. "Definitely being in this program, in engineering in general, it's beneficial to us because we get to actually use all of the tools that engineers usually use," said junior Raymond Bagaygay. "It gets us prepared for what our jobs will be when we get there."

Yamasaki's program also boasts a nearly equal split between male and female participants. Engineering is often considered to be a male-dominated field. "When I started robotics I came in with two male friends. They kind of put me to the side like, 'You're a girl, you can't really do this,'" said Adriana Cardenas, a senior. "I ended up staying and they quit; it was too much for them."

"We call them 'Fem-ineers,'" said junior Nicholas Acosta. "They're definitely up and coming."

One of the engineering Vikings' next tasks is to build a human-sized robot that is able to do tasks such as shoot a ball and stack boxes.

Those who wish to follow the progress of the Downey High Engineering program can follow @DHSstrikingvikings on Instagram and @DHS\_FRC on Twitter.

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Washington, March 28, 2013

Patrick Gurrrola  
 9903 Paramount Blvd, Suite 229  
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Dear Mr. Patrick Gurrrola,

Many thanks for keeping us informed of your sustained and successful campaign to establish a sister-city connection between Downey, CA and the birthplace of John Downey in Co. Roscommon, Ireland.

We are delighted to learn that this relationship has now been formalized and will be celebrated in Ireland as part of 'The Gathering' in the third week of May.

Sister-city connections are vitally important to keeping alive the deep ties of family, history, culture and values between the European Union and the United States. We salute your efforts in cultivating and maintaining these important relationships.

With Sincere good wishes,



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## CRIME WATCH PAGES FLOURISHING ON FACEBOOK

Author **Alex Dominguez**

Thousands of Downey residents are doing what they can to help curb crime and keep their community safe by participating in a Facebook-organized crime watch.

The original Crime Watch of Downey Facebook page was created in July of 2014 by Kandy Grzebyk.

"The reason I started the page was so that people could keep their loved ones and their property safe," said Grzebyk. "When you hear sirens you want to know if you should be concerned. I want to know if a helicopter is flying low if we should go inside and lock the doors. Other people wanted to know as well and that's what the page was created for."

Since its beginnings the page has grown significantly, now boasting more than 6,000 community members. A small handful of admins maintain the page, monitoring for profanity, solicitations, duplicate posts and arguments.

Grzebyk and the other admins also take great care to not interfere with Downey Police Department business and do not tolerate anyone "slamming" officials.

"Crime has a way of making some very passionate and opinionated and some threads heat up quickly," said Grzebyk, who added that nearly 800 people have been blocked for inappropriate behavior. According to Grzebyk, she has had mixed feedback concerning the Crime Watch page.

"Some people will message me and tell me I am irresponsible for letting people post coyotes on the page and that it's causing mass hysteria," she said. "Others will message me thanking us for our work and because of our post they knew what to expect."

Another crime watch page, this one an "anything goes" edition, was started by Ray Metzger, who is also an admin on the original page.

"I got involved because of drugs, lewd acts, theft, and graffiti being perpetrated in my own neighborhood," said Metzger. "My catalytic converter was stolen from my truck three times. So I decided to help fight crime any way I could."

Metzger's page has gathered more than 1,200 members, and rules are more relaxed.

For more information on either crime watch page or to join, search for "Crime Watch of Downey, CA" or "Downey Crime Watch Anything Goes Edition" on Facebook.

Anyone who falls victim to or witnesses a crime is still encouraged to contact local authorities first.

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## October

- ▶ Author, humorist and pop culture expert Charles Phoenix led a program titled "Up With Downey" at the Columbia Memorial Space Center.
- ▶ "Catch 22," a solo exhibit by Don Lamkin, opened at Stay Gallery.
- ▶ An elderly Downey man was swindled out of \$30,000 after falling for a scam in which a thief pretended to be an IRS agent collecting back taxes.
- ▶ Police released surveillance video hoping to generate leads in the killing of 19-year-old James Lieneke, who was gunned down on Woodruff Avenue just south of Firestone Boulevard.

Lieneke was walking northbound on Woodruff at about 3 a.m. on April 19 when a vehicle pulled alongside him. Jumping from a dark-colored sedan, the shooter confronts Lieneke one-on-one, engaging in a quick conversation before opening fire and speeding away southbound.

- ▶ A Downey man was arrested in connection with a video posted on Instagram that appeared to threaten an LAPD officer. Alex Izquierdo, 35, allegedly posted the 15-second video that shows an armed man sitting in a car behind an LAPD officer. LAPD officials said the video was intended to be a publicity stunt as part of a comeback by a 1990s rap group.
- ▶ A homeless man who admitted to killing a man and burying his body along the 105 Freeway was sentenced to six years in prison.

Bryan Petty, 25, pleaded no contest to voluntary manslaughter. He was originally charged with murder after he killed 35-year-old David Vallejo on April 1, 2013, but the only witness in the case said Petty acted in self-defense when he struck Vallejo with a piece of pipe. Petty said he buried Vallejo's body because he feared gang retribution. "It was a difficult case," Deputy District Attorney Steven Schreiner told City News Service. "It's hard to know exactly what went on there."

- ▶ Former Warren High baseball coach Tom Bergeron was inducted into the CIF Southern Section Hall of Fame.
- ▶ Councilman Roger Brossmer directed staff to begin work on a possible ballot initiative that would allow residents to decide whether to ban all fireworks in the city.
- ▶ Candidates for Downey school board participated in a forum at the Columbia Memorial Space Center, hosted by the Downey Patriot and Former Downey Mayors Coalition. All incumbents – Tod Corrin, D. Mark Morris, Willie Gutierrez and Donald LaPlante – would be re-elected.

- ▶ Three people, including a toddler, were found dead inside a Downey apartment in an apparent murder-suicide.

Family members checked on the family, who lived inside an apartment unit on the 7300 block of Neo Street, after not hearing from them for two days.

"They went to the landlord, who gave them a key. They went inside, discovered the victims, and then they called the Downey Police Department," Lt. Mark McDaniel told media. According to ABC-7, a woman and 1-year-old child were found in a bathtub full of water, and the woman's boyfriend was dead inside a bedroom.

- ▶ A former Downey High student who engaged in a sexual relationship with a teacher sued the Downey Unified School District. The suit also named former teacher and coach Brandon Hitchcock, alleging he initiated a sexual relationship with the girl that lasted several months.

- ▶ Fresh & Easy announced plans to close all its stores, including the Downey location at Firestone Boulevard and Downey Avenue.

- ▶ The Downey Symphony launched its 58th season with a Russian-themed concert at the Downey Theatre.

- ▶ Warren High students Natalie Resendez and Sarah Gonzalez were chosen from more than 600 auditioning students from high schools throughout Southern California to perform in the Tournament of Roses Parade on New Year's Day.

- ▶ Carrie Redfox, a teacher and guidance counselor at Doty Middle School, received an "Amazing Women" award from the Long Beach Press-Telegram in honor of all the ways she gives back to her students and community. "I was raised to have a caring heart for others," Redfox said. "My experiences have taught me to have compassion for kids who are having a hard time. The reward I get back from helping them is incredible."

- ▶ The resurgent Warren High Bears football team beat rival Downey, 23-6. The Bears would go on to share the San Gabriel Valley League championship with Downey and Dominguez.

- ▶ Warren High's girls volleyball team won the San Gabriel Valley League title. The Bears also won league championships in boys and girls cross country.

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## A LONG LOST BRACELET FINDS ITS WAY HOME

*Author Jay Rants*

**F**our weeks ago, a man named Mark Spencer was looking for buried treasure on the beaches of Queensland, Australia, with his metal detector.

He found a bracelet, and upon further inspection he realized that it belonged to a man named Hanford Rants. Because of the flags and other images on it, he deduced that Hanford must have been there during World War II.

Mark then called a lady named Francesca in Humboldt County who runs an organization called DogTags.com. She matches dog tags that have been found with the owner or next of kin. She then called my brother, Jon, in Colorado, and me, Jay, in beautiful Downey. We both were amazed! She put us both in touch with Mark, and through emailing, the bracelet arrived at my house last week.

My wife, Nikki, and I were overwhelmed with the significance of this tarnished piece of jewelry. My brothers and I will pass it back and forth – Downey to Oregon to Colorado – to give each of us the opportunity to experience a small part of my dad’s amazing “adventures” when he was overseas for 2 ½ years in the Philippines during WWII. Thank you very much, Mark!

My dad became pen pals with a lady from Tacoma, Wash. named Shirley Viken during the war. They corresponded for over two years. When he finally arrived back in the states, his ship docked in Tacoma. This allowed Shirley and her parents to meet Hanford as he left the ship.

Talk about love at first sight! Three days later, he asked her to get married. She said yes. So much for a long courtship.

Several years later they moved to Downey. Hanford was the second principal at South Junior High. Later he became the first principal at West Junior High. He coined the phrase “West is Best.” Later he became the second principal at Warren High School. During his tenure there, his three sons – Jon, Jay and Jack – all attended and graduated there. It was an awesome experience for the whole family.

In 1993, Hanford wrote a book about his war experiences, good and bad. It was written for his three sons, but eventually he sent out many copies of it to his war buddies, close friends, etc. People were amazed to read about the day to day “hell” that he and his buddies went through. Intense! He has written a supplement to his book which describes in brutal detail 16 times he should have died – and gives God thanks for seeing him through each experience.

I sent a copy of his book to Mark Spencer last week. I have some copies that I sell to people who are really interested in the true story of what WWII was like.

If my dad were still alive, he would have been overcome with emotion on seeing his old bracelet that was 73 years old.

*Merry Christmas*



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## November



► Jeremiah Succar, a 7-year-old boy battling stage 4 ATRT brain cancer, was awarded the Mayor's Courage Award by Mayor Luis Marquez.

► Revitalization efforts in Downtown Downey picked up some momentum as the city planning commission paved the way for another upscale restaurant and lounge along Downey Avenue.

In a unanimous vote, the commissioners approved plans to convert the vacant office building on the northeast corner of 2nd Street and Downey Avenue into Cielo Restaurant & Lounge, a steakhouse with a unique feature -- a 2,650-sq.-ft. rooftop bar.

The business is a joint venture between Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney and Downey resident Mario Trujillo, Downey Councilman Fernando Vasquez, and Ralph Verdugo, who previously attempted a similar concept at the Rives Mansion in 2013.

► Taco Bell transported its very first restaurant from Downey to its corporate headquarters in Irvine. Glen Bell started his first Taco Bell restaurant in 1962 as the centerpiece of a Mexican-inspired strip mall with shops, live music, and fire pits. It was here at 7112 Firestone Blvd. that Bell helped revolutionize the quick-service industry by bringing Mexican-inspired meals to his customers.

The decision to save and relocate the structure, which Taco Bell has dubbed "Numero Uno," comes months after local preservation groups protested after learning the site was in danger of demolition.

► Downey held its annual Veterans Day ceremony outside City Hall, paying tribute to local veterans.



► The Southeast Area Animal Control Authority (SEAACA) celebrated its 40th anniversary with a grand re-opening that celebrated the newly-renovated facility.

The entire inside of the shelter received new flooring; kennels were dismantled, repaired and reconditioned; all surfaces, walls and doors were repainted; plumbing and electrical components were also upgraded and repaired. The shelter had not been upgraded since 2002.

"With the state-of-the-art facility we can continue to provide outstanding services for our 14 cities," said executive director Sally Hazzard. "The animals in our care are benefiting tremendously as a result of the renovation."

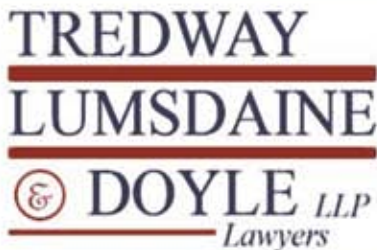
► The third annual Dia de los Muertos Festival attracted thousands to the civic center.

► Hundreds of senior citizens enjoyed a complimentary Thanksgiving dinner at Stauffer Middle School, an annual tradition at the campus.

► More than 2,000 people attended a college and career fair hosted by the Downey Unified School District.

► Dr. Mary Stauffer awarded nearly \$30,000 in scholarships to 266 straight-A middle school students.

► Downey attorneys Ricardo Perez, Eber Bayona and Erick Solares, along with Judge Ana Maria Luna (a Downey native) embarked on a delegation to Chile, where they took part in legal seminars, met with university professors, and visited the Office of the American Ambassador to Chile.



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## DOWNEY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST GANGS

*Author Judge Philip Mautino*

The following is a transcript of the keynote address delivered by Judge Philip Mautino at the 2015 Gangs Out of Downey luncheon. Mautino is supervising judge at Los Padrinos Juvenile Court.

Los Angeles has been the mother of modern street gangs. Some of these gangs are made up of several hundred members and they are across the United States and down into Latin America. The Bloods and the Crips are the black gangs that originated here and have had gang wars in locations such as Stockton, Calif.; Portland, Ore.; and are found in Minnesota, Atlanta, Louisville and down in Michoacán, Mexico.

Much of the violence in Central America, especially in El Salvador and Honduras, are conflicted between MS 13 that formed around McArthur Park in Los Angeles and the 18th Street that's also a Los Angeles city gang.

In 2001, I came to Los Padrinos and was told there were 800 fighting gangs in Los Angeles County and about 90,000 confirmed gang members in our computers and an additional 60,000 wannabe's. That's a force of 150,000 – probably the same numbers we had in Iraq or in the Middle East.

Where did all these gangsters come from? Sociologists tell us the following: it started with the great immigration trends. Large numbers of Latinos have been coming across the borders for years and years. And they come to Southern California. They are poor, not highly educated and they have a tough time working into the society of America. There's a large body of blacks who moved from the south and the north after WWII and came to Los Angeles – relocating to the Compton area and South Central Los Angeles.

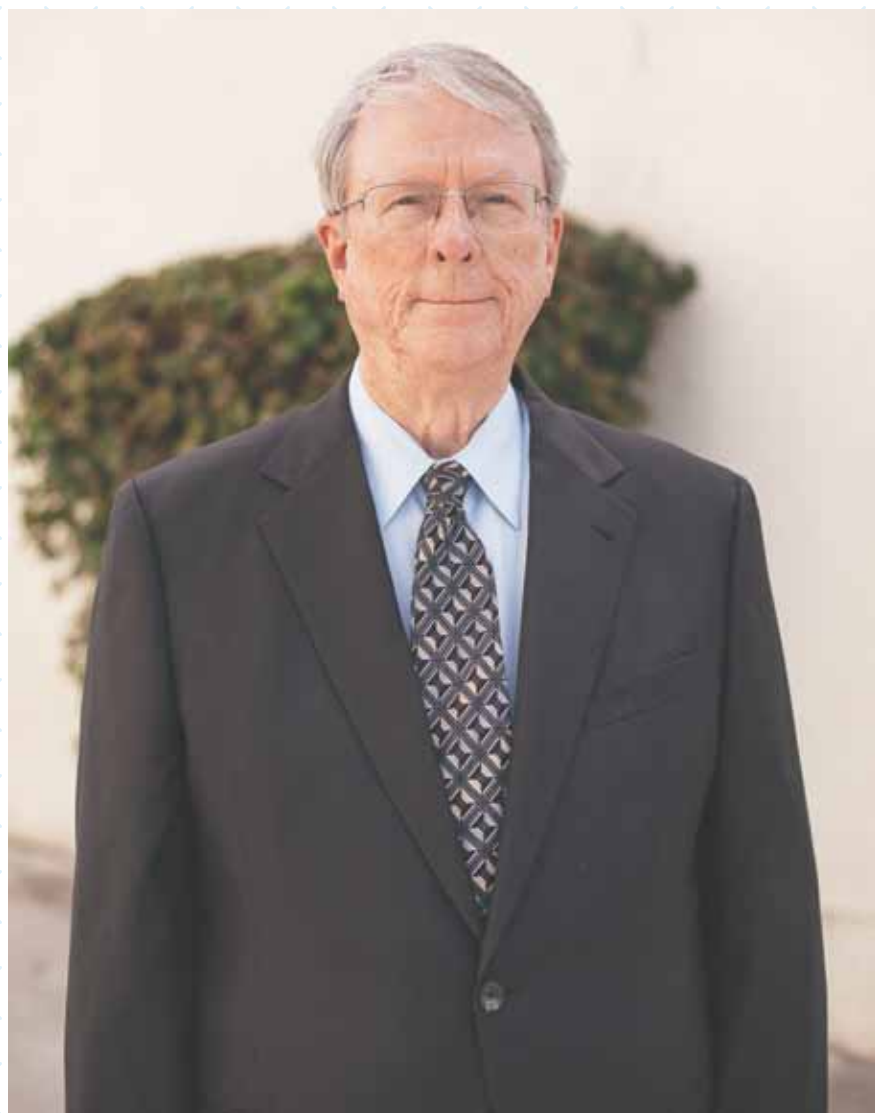
Another cause were the Watts Riot of 1965 and the later Watts Riot in the '70s that caused a tremendous amount of homeowners and whites to move to the suburbs, leaving these areas open to the lower income groups and underemployed.

Another major factor was construction of high density apartment houses. Instead of having homeowners who had a stake in the community and cared deeply about where they lived, you had low-income renters who came and went, and the streets were highly crowded with cars and with sofas and furniture that was abandoned when the tenants would move.

The streets also became full of teenagers and gangs started to form based on race: the blacks, the Latinos, all the nations down in South America. Asian gangs – Chinese, Cambodian, Korean and even from Vietnam we had the Mong tribe that also formed into gangs.

Another major factor was the Mexican Mafia – an adult prison gang. The Mexican drug cartels produced the heroin and marijuana and the Mexican Mafia was able to grab hold of its distribution. Drugs proved very lucrative to the street gangs as a way for poor people to make a lot of money. The Mafia provided the distribution and the gangs became territorial as they staked out their neighborhood streets and tried to exclude others from trying to sell drugs or having any other kind of criminal activities in their area.

You can tell who they are. They had their uniforms. They had hoodies, they had the long shirts, the baggy pants. Unfortunately, they became more and more violent as modern weaponry became available to them. Prior to World War II, they had knives and maybe homemade zip guns but after World War II they armed themselves with revolvers and other weapons.



The names of the gangs reflected their territories and have become very infamous – such as 18th Street, Grape Street Crips, Hoover Street, Piru Street (a gang in Compton), and unfortunately the Brock Street Barrio Locos that were here in Downey at one time.

Graffiti was used to delineate the territory and it would also ignite turf wars when one group would try to take over the territory of another. The code was the letter “R” for RIFA, which means “we rule” or “our gang rules.”

We also had Con Sufes CS on these signs which meant that nothing could wipe it out even if you paint this over, nothing can change the fact that we rule. This led to a tremendous amount of violence between the gangs over these territories and the ability to sell drugs and do local crime and shake down local businesses. The neighborhoods and the parks became dangerous, especially at night, and the residents who were peaceful stayed off the streets and the businesses had to deal with these problems.

The Mexican Mafia is strongest in Southern California and 10 years ago they decided to take over the street gangs. They controlled all the drugs from the Mexican drug cartels and so they demanded that the street gangs affiliate with them, and if they did then they would solely be provided the drugs and they would also be provided what we call “OG’s,” or Old Gangsters. These are criminal gangsters from the Mafia who had gotten out of prison and they would



## *Continued*

be assigned to these gangs to teach them techniques and to organize the gangs. In return for this, the members of the gangs were taxed monthly. They had to pay money. So they had to go sell the drugs so they could pay for the Old Gangsters as collectors for the Mafia.

They also provided the discipline. If you did not pay your fines, you were subject to be beaten or killed. They have what is a policy called the "green light" – if you had a green light you could be killed. If a gang did not cooperate anymore and pay their taxes, the whole gang could be green lighted. We have never seen a whole gang murdered but we have seen many individuals who were killed.

Unfortunately this helped evolve the street gangs into much more of an organized New York Mafia situation.

It's interesting to note that the Mexican Mafia did help our situation in one way. They did not like the conspicuousness of the tattoos and flashy uniforms. They banned drive-by shootings because of the disorder and bad publicity. They pushed the gangs indoors as much as possible.

The Mafia is also known as La Eme – that's the 13th letter of the Spanish alphabet and the gangs would adopt the number 13 in their names. So you have Whittier 13, La Mirada 13, Florencia 13 and you have several without the number, like Dog Patch in Paramount and the Brock Street Barrio Locos in Downey.

Has there been a decline in gangs? Statistics show there has been. When you look at the statistics of gang robberies in 2002, there were 3,300 gang-related robberies and this past year there have been 1,000 gang-related robberies. Carjackings have gone from 211 in 2003 down to 33 in 2013. We have similar stats from Downey showing that gang-related assaults have gone from about 17 five years ago to this past year of only 2. Also, we have been noticing a great deal less of graffiti throughout the county and here in Downey.

What have been some of the causes of this? First the gang injunctions. We have approximately 44 gang injunctions against 72 gangs in Los Angeles County. This means that two gangsters are not allowed to gather in a certain geographical area. If two of them are together, it's a violation of a crime, a misdemeanor, and a sentence of up to six months in jail and they get arrested for just hanging out together once they are identified as a member of that gang.

Gang injunctions are very effective with minors. They wear uniforms and hang out on the street corners. Their arrests are a tremendous deterrent to the gangs.

Second are the RICO statutes. RICO is Racketeering Influence and Corruption Organizations. This is a federal statute used against the New York Mafia gangs. However, it is now applied to the local gang situation here in Los Angeles County.

The RICO is based on the theory that you're not going to get very far in just knocking out the leaders of the gangs and you have to take huge chunks of the gang membership out of the community. In 2008 we filed against the 147 members of the Hawaiian Gardens gang known as HG. Since it's a federal law, we are not required to use California prisons and so they were sent to federal facilities such as those in Arkansas and Indiana. This broke up the whole gang situation. It stopped all visitation and communicating while in jail.

We have had 24 RICO criminal actions since 2006. Florencia 13 down in Watts lost 102 members. They took out 41 of an El Monte gang.

Another factor is the strong use of statistics by all the police forces. Now they keep very careful statistics of what type of crime and their location. This lets law enforcement know where to focus their police efforts.

Community policing has been another major change. The old style was just hard law enforcement with police being in patrol cars and arresting and pulling

over criminals. Now the police have gone into the communities. They realized that with gangs, the old style was not working and they were not getting good results. Now through all of Los Angeles County, you are now seeing the police engaged in their local community. They meet with ministers and community groups. They form neighborhood watches. They are someone you can go to if you need broken windows fixed, trees trimmed or garbage and trash removed.

It's interesting to note that this past January 2015, two Los Angeles Police Department officers were invited to President Obama's State of the Union address to honor their work in Watts. They have become very community oriented. They founded a 150-member Girl Scout troop and run it. They have formed the Watts Bears football team for ages 9-11. We have seen a tremendous reduction in graffiti and gang activity in the Watts area.

The community policing activities has had its effect. In 2009, the Los Angeles Times took a poll and found two-thirds of the blacks and three-fourths of the Latinos in Los Angeles County had a favorable view of the Los Angeles Police Department.

In Downey, the police force is deeply engaged in community projects such as neighborhood watch, school safety, patrolling on foot, bike riding patrols in the parks, vacation watches, and using dogs to sniff out drugs in the school lockers and everywhere else. They are also on campus five days a week at Downey High, Warren High, Columbus High and wherever else they are needed.

I think we should note that the Brock Street Barrio Locos are no more. In fact, there are no established gangs in the city of Downey. The graffiti you now see is done by what we call "oners." Some minors who just want to put his name or moniker up on a fence. None of it, or very little of it, has anything to do with a gang.

Sergeant Cooper of the Downey Police Department, Corporal Shaw and Officer Romo, I believe they are here today, are doing a great job. I would also like to point out Darrell Jackson of the 10-20 Club. It provides great counseling here for drugs, violence and family problems. We at the Los Padrinos Juvenile Court rely on his organization for help.

What now? Unfortunately the Mexican Mafia and drug cartels are still present and very active. The crime is much more indoors, using computers, identity thefts and they are selling their drugs from inside of an apartment or inside of a house. They are still very highly sophisticated and disciplined and they are a menace to our community.

However, at least our streets and the parks are safer, and the everyday life has been greatly improved with much less problems with graffiti. Also, the Mafia has taken the panache out of being a gangster. The green light disciplines, the beatings, the killings, have made being a gangster not exactly what a young man really wants.

There's a lot of work to do; we must be constantly vigilant.

I wish to thank everyone here today for your support of Gangs Out of Downey. GOOD was founded in 1989, meets monthly and brings together probation officers, Downey Police Department, educators, small business people, elected officials and concerned citizens.

It supports drug, gang and anger management counseling at the 10-20 Club in Downey, graffiti removal and additional funding for policing the schools.

Everyone is a volunteer and of all the 22 cities I cover at Los Padrinos, Downey is the only one with an organization of this kind. Your presence here today means a great deal to us.

# What Downey Doodle-icious Means To Me

AUTHOR KELLY SALINAS



One brief look, and I am immediately flooded with memories of my childhood. Stitched together before me is my hometown as I remember it. I see the YMCA, where I spent my summers learning to swim; Del Rio Lanes, where so many of my classmates celebrated their eighth birthday, cosmic bowling style. I see the Space Center, the field trip that every fifth grader looks forward to, and Bob's Big Boy, where I've sat and eaten countless times with family and friends. I even see the Downey Patriot, the paper on my coffee table every Sunday morning.

"Downey Doodle-icious" is my story. In fact, for many of us young people, it is our story. Having grown up in Downey, there is a sense of familiarity, of home. From the iconic businesses and restaurants, to the schools and landmarks, "Downey Doodle-icious" truly captures the essence of Downey as many of us remember it from childhood.

While "Downey Doodle-icious" captures our treasured past, its placement in Downtown Downey is a symbol of exciting new beginnings. The art movement in Downey has quickly gained momentum, and we are

seeing exciting new changes as Downey evolves into a creative community, enticing many of us who are currently deciding where to apply for college to stay local to be part of the community of change.

With the coming changes in Downey, this mural embodies everything we know and love about the city many of us grew up in. The Downey portrayed in the mural is where we watched the Christmas parade every year on Downey Avenue, where we shopped at All American with our parents, where our artwork was featured in DMOA; it is the Downey that created leaders that want to give back to the city that has given so much to us.

The mural is both a memory, and an exciting preview. This is only the beginning, and although Downey is taking on a new aesthetic, it will never change what truly has made this city what it is, its caring community, and the kids who grew up in the city painted on Downey Avenue are eager to see and be part of what is to come.

*Kelly Salinas is Warren High School ASB president, class of 2016.*





## BOB WINNINGHAM SUCCUMBS TO CANCER



In 2015, Downey lost a former mayor, Bob Winningham.

Winningham served only four years on the City Council, from 1998 to 2002, declining to run for re-election. But in those four years he accomplished a tremendous amount: he helped lay the groundwork for what would later lead to the Downey Landing, Columbia Memorial Space Center, the new Kaiser Permanente hospital, Independence Park, and the soon-to-be Promenade.

Winningham was instrumental in the renovation of the Rio Hondo Event Center (then known as Rio Hondo Country Club). A ballroom at the Rio Hondo Event Center was named in Winningham's honor earlier this year.

Winningham was born Nov. 25, 1955 in Huntington Park. He was raised in Downey and attended Rio San Gabriel Elementary, East Middle School and graduated from Downey High, class of 1973.

He began work at the family business, Downey Vendors, right after high school. In 1977, he married his high school sweetheart, Carol Lewis, and they had three children: Jennifer (1978), Amanda (1981) and Scott (1982). The family lived in Downey and Bob became involved in a wide variety of community activities.

Winningham served on the board of Northwest Downey Little League and later served as president. He was a longtime member of the Optimist Club of Downey, where he volunteered long hours serving the children of Downey through the Halloween pumpkin patch and other fundraising events.

Winningham was also very active with the Downey YMCA. He supported the YMCA's annual support campaign; was a cook for Easter Caravan; was a member of the Board of Managers (including two years as chairman of the board); chaired its Finance Committee; was head of campaign finances and fundraising; and was head of the Chairman's Roundtable.

In January 2007, Winningham married his current wife, Michele. Although they lived in Yorba Linda, Winningham stayed active in Downey.

Bob passed away on April 28, 2015 after a long battle with cancer. He was 59.

"He was a selfless person, always putting his family and others before himself," the Downey YMCA said in a statement. "Even though he was taken from us too soon, he made a lasting mark on his friends and the community that will never be forgotten. Bob was loved by so many, his infectious laugh and humor will forever be missed."

## LORINE PARKS KEEPING POETRY ALIVE IN DOWNEY



*Author Carol Kearns*

In 2015, Downey poet Lorine Parks introduced her new book, "Persons of Interest." Parks is a prolific writer, and the title of this volume reflects the wide-ranging subjects of her inspiration.

Her poems span both time and place as she gives voice to such disparate figures as Ariadne from Greek mythology, a medieval peasant paying his tithe, a woman betrayed by an errant husband, and a priest ministering to inmates on death row. The tone of each piece shifts, sometimes reverent, sometimes humorous, sometimes horrifying, as Parks assumes each new perspective and voice.

Parks is a well-known figure around Downey for her community service activities with the Rotary Club, Downey YMCA, Soroptimists, and the Downey Symphony, and for her thirty-five years as the owner of an independent travel agency. Retirement in 2010 gave her more time for poetry and she sets aside several hours each morning to write.

While she is disciplined about using the mornings to revise and edit, she says the idea for a poem can occur anywhere - in the car, at the breakfast table, or while taking a bath.

"I usually stop and write as much as I can while the moment is with me," she explains, "even if it means pulling the car over to the side of the road."

When she is inspired, she writes as much as possible. "I don't ever try to harness it."

Park's imagination does not limit her to human subjects. Animal lovers will chuckle over the canine take on the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show and Pavlov's experiment as seen from the perspective of the dog.

Current and historical events are also sources for Parks, and her well crafted pieces lead to unexpected and chilling places. In "Ali Monsoon" she gives voice to the thoughts she imagines are in the mind of a Palestinian suicide bomber. Chilling for a different reason is "the singing of the Titanic," a piece in which the crashing and crushing of the ship unfolds as orchestral music.

Balanced against these poems of imagination are writings that stem from Parks's heart and spirit. Women will recognize the grief as palpable in "the French call them love tips," a poem about the loss of a child. Some mothers will concur with the life lesson expressed in metaphor as a woman thinks of her mother while playing computer solitaire - "if it isn't going to be a winner / toss it don't waste your time don't settle." And both men and women will nod with understanding as the Old Woman considers her "exit" strategies - "she refuses to rot and go to mulch....she'd rather be road kill / fully alive until hit / like the young men at war."

Parks's first book, "Catalina Eddy" was published in 2012. This collection grew from the human tendency to personify our weather with human names and attributes - Mae Gray, June Gloom, Polar Flo. Parks imagined distinct personalities for each name, and together they became a "noir-ish" clan of mobsters and molls with their fierce hurricane relatives - Camille, Gustavo, and Ernesto.

"Catalina Eddy" grew from the culture and climate of southern California. Park's second collection, "Persons of Interest," spans the world and human history.

## December

- ▶ The Downey Christmas Parade, dedicated to fallen police officer Ricky Galvez, took place on Downey Avenue. Ernie Hudson of "Ghostbusters" was the grand marshal.
- ▶ The tone was subdued, but Downey held its annual tree-lighting ceremony outside City Hall.
- ▶ The Downey Master Chorale performed its Christmas concert at Cornerstone Christian Worship Center.

## DOWNEY NATIVE BRANDON CHAVERS MAKES IT TO PRO BASKETBALL IN MEXICO

**Author Christian Brown**

Downey is known for a lot of things.

It's the aerospace city that helped get man to the moon. It's the Los Angeles suburb of fast-food royalty, helping to launch giant restaurant chains like McDonald's, Taco Bell and El Taco.

It'll never cease to be the hometown of Richard and Karen Carpenter, but fast forward into the 21st century and there may be a new name in Downey's hall of fame: Brandon Chavers.

Unlike previous standouts, the 24-year-old Downey native stands 6 feet, 6 inches tall, 250 pounds and is known for his performance on the basketball court.

After two years of playing at the college level, Chavers signed over the summer to play professional basketball for the San Luis Santos in Mexico.

However, the brawny forward, who averaged 10 points and three rebounds per game during his last season at Bristol University, had a difficult road early on, plagued with setbacks and missteps.

"I never took school serious and it hurt me," he said. "It kept me from getting to the big stage faster."

Playing since the age of 5, Chavers remembers playing basketball at the Downey YMCA and Apollo Park motivated by his basketball loving father, Lloyd. What started off as a hobby, quickly turned into a passion for the younger Chavers.

"I stuck with it. It's always cool being a part of a team that all your friends are a part of," he said. "Kobe, LeBron, Camelo – those were my heroes."

Fortunate for Chavers, he had the talent to match, which led him to a junior varsity spot on Warren High School's basketball team in his

freshman and sophomore years. By the time he was a junior, Chavers was on the varsity team.

Unfortunately, his love of basketball had a negative effect on his grades, placing his promising path on hold as Chavers was reassigned to Columbus High School to finish his senior year.

"If I could've come back to Warren, I would've played college basketball, but I had to take care of business," he said. "My parents were upset, but they didn't stop encouraging me."

Motivated to reclaim his childhood dream of playing basketball professionally, Chavers rallied to graduate from Columbus High and in the course of a year, he was ranked as one of the best players in his division at East Los Angeles College.

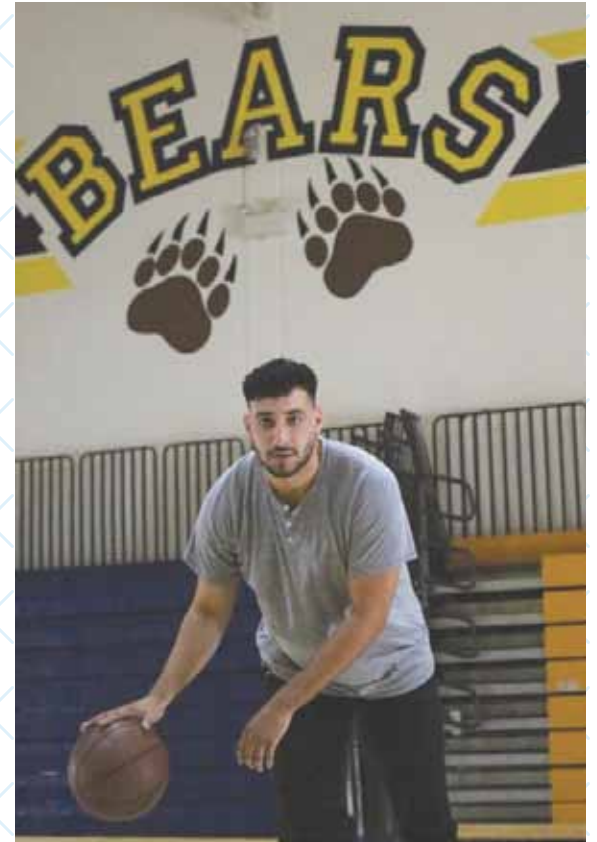
While working to obtain his associate's degree, Chavers moved up north to play basketball for Santa Rosa Junior College before returning to Southern California the following year to play at Bristol University in Anaheim.

Chavers' performance in the 2014-15 season at Bristol was stellar enough to garner attention from pro teams.

"I kept going back and forth about finishing school, but if I have a chance of getting paid to play basketball, I've got to take advantage of that," he said.

Along with his manager, Chavers fielded offers in Mexico and Israel, but ultimately decided to settle on playing in the birth country of his mother: Mexico.

Raised in a biracial home, Chavers, whose father is black, speaks and writes Spanish fluently, an asset he'll now use as a member of the San Luis Santos, a popular team with Mexican basketball fans living in San Luis, which is five hours north of Mexico City.



"It's cool to play pro, you get treated well, extra this and that, but it takes up a lot of your time," said Chavers who left Downey in October to begin training camp in San Luis. "My mom always makes jokes that I'm here, but never really here."

Nonetheless, Chavers, who began his 2015-16 season on Nov. 1, encourages other aspiring athletes to dream big and work hard if they want to reach professional status.

"As someone who didn't come from a bigger basketball program without many resources, I had to keep on working," he said. "It was something I wanted so I couldn't let outside influences stop me."

"But as much as the game takes from you, it gives you a lot. In the end, it'll be worth it."



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## RICARDO GALVEZ, A LIFE CUT SHORT

Author *Eric Pierce*

Ricardo “Ricky” Galvez was on routine patrol one night when he spotted a vehicle with expired registration. Galvez activated his lights and pulled over the driver. It was an elderly woman.

“License and registration?” Galvez asked. The woman complied even as her eyes watered and a knot formed in her throat. She appeared on the verge of breaking down in tears.

The elderly woman explained that her husband had recently died. Bills were piling up and her financial situation was worsening. She had no money to pay the DMV.

Galvez lent a sympathetic ear and reassured her that things would get better. He let her go with a warning. The following day, Galvez walked into the AAA office in Downey and paid the woman’s expired registration. It was \$166.

Galvez, 29, told the story in an Instagram post. His intent was not to receive recognition or adulation, but to encourage others to be thankful for their blessings.

“I am blessed and this lady touched my heart so I wanted to give something in return by helping her,” Galvez wrote. “We spend money on partying, items we don’t really need or dinner at a fancy restaurant, why not help someone that needs help and does not have the luxury.”

Galvez’s life came to a tragic and premature end Nov. 18. Prosecutors claim that Abel Diaz, 16, and Steven Knott, 18, approached Galvez as he sat in his personal car in the north parking lot of the Downey police station. It’s unclear who pulled the trigger, but prosecutors allege that either Diaz or Knott shot Galvez during a botched robbery, killing him instantly.

Diaz and Knott fled in a Nissan driven by 21-year-old Jeremy Alvarez. After a short pursuit, the three suspects were arrested in Montebello. They will be arraigned Dec. 17 on murder charges.

Galvez was a U.S. Marine, having put in two separate tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, only to be gunned down in his own backyard.

The murder of Ricky Galvez – an undeniable hero in a world that is growing increasingly cold and chaotic – sent Downey into a prolonged state of mourning. But his death also unified the community in a show of solidarity for the police department.

Young children delivered home-baked cookies to the police station; businesses taped strips of blue vinyl to their storefronts; florists made and distributed blue ribbons; residents installed blue light bulbs on their porches; resident Michael Chirco fashioned a giant “I (heart) My PD” out of plywood and placed it on his rooftop (and offered to do the same for others); Risher Mortuary donated its services; residents gave tens of thousands of dollars to Galvez’s family; and the list goes on.

The Downey community mourns because we lost a public servant, a respected citizen, and a friend. But our pain can not compare to the



hurt felt by Galvez’s immediate family. They lost a son, a brother and a grandson.

Ricky Galvez died too soon and too young. He was the victim of a society that puts too small a price on the value of human life.

Downey will forever be indebted to Ricky Galvez. As Mayor Luis Marquez said, “We shall mourn together, we shall heal together,” but we will never forget.



## WHERE DID READERS TAKE THE PATRIOT IN 2015?



## The following is a list of people whose obituary appeared in The Downey Patriot in 2015, through December 11.

- Robert Aguirre
- Randal Alan Albrecht
- Caroline Marie Allen
- George Euangelos Anagnos
- Michael Bakel
- Virginia Mae Baker
- Cyril Barber
- Kenneth Beckner
- Edla Charlotte Carolyn
- Johnson Bengston
- James Charles Berry
- Darrell Bever
- Elmer Black
- Mark Blackburn
- Wilda Billie Blaine
- Mary Catharine Blomgren
- Nancy Bertwell Bloxham
- Charles Bowers
- Laura Brandenburg
- Rosemary Broska
- Loretta Brown
- Sona Brown
- Donald Burns
- Louis Caldarelli
- Patricia Ann Campbell
- Lola Ann Chesick
- Hubie Clark Jr.
- Janet Bradshaw Clark
- Sam Cochran
- Donald Cook
- Betty Coon
- Catherine Corbin-Emerick
- James Rudolph Crook
- Duane Croom
- Charles Joseph Davilla
- June Davis
- Elvia DeLeon
- Eileen Mathieu Delis
- Donald Desfor
- Maria Dominguez
- Jack Allan Dow
- Donald Edward Duckett
- Anna Eich
- Raymundo Escarciga
- Joseph Faulkner
- Eldon Everett Feltnor
- Joshua Ray Figueroa
- Charlotte Marie Fiola
- Thelma Fisher
- Sherley Freudenberger
- Charles Frisco
- William Fryxell
- Ray Garcia
- Herbert Charles Goepel
- Alan Paige Gorsline
- Nettie Goto
- Curtis Grissom
- Katherine May Hambrick
- Harry Hem
- Owen Earl Heninger
- William C. Hills
- Helen Hoag
- Valerie Hollister
- Nolan Hubbs
- James Patrick Hughes
- Delores Arlene Jacobsen
- Nancy Jones
- Margaret Mary Keller
- Shirley Kelly
- Wally Kincaid
- Jean Kiskadden
- John Koshear
- Mildred Kullbom
- Cleo Catherine Latimer
- John Lehmann
- Louise Lewis
- Laurence Dean Lockhart
- Dale Lostetter
- Mary Louise Loya
- Ida Lux
- Michael Maddocks
- Mario Magat
- Rukmini Maline
- Minerva Marsden
- Bernice Mason
- Woodrow Wilson Meier
- Sara Mendez
- Alta Morelli
- Betty Louise Morrison
- Dale Dehaven Myers
- Robert Nicholas Sr.
- Isaac Okebiorun
- Ralph Orahood
- Ralph Francis Osterbauer
- Esther Pagaduan
- Harriett Paine
- Andrew Joseph Paramo
- Frederick William Pawell
- Alberto Perez
- Rosalie Peters
- Walfrido Elias Planas
- Helena Platzer
- Ernest Porras
- Helen Hanges Reagan
- Margie Anne Richey
- Bill Roberts
- Dennis Rode
- Dale Wesley Rose
- Charles Russell Jr.
- Bruce Wayne Rutledge
- Fernando Sanchez
- Vera Alice Sanchez
- Alana Sauerwein
- Jeannette Savage
- Emma Schwarz
- Beverly Smith
- Joyce Marie Sok
- Nancy Lou Spilsbury
- Starla Stephens
- Maria Reyes Sullivan
- Frank Szechy
- Robert Lee Stiles
- Juanita Talbert
- Richard Teran
- Edward Todd
- George Ernest Toerge Jr.
- Gerald Tompkins
- Marilyn Tuggle
- Esther Uva
- Beverly Vinson
- Daisy Warman
- Matthew Wassenaar
- Jean Weber
- Grady Williams
- Beverly Jane Willick
- Lois Wilson
- Bob Winningham
- W. Alden Wright
- Elizabeth Faye Scott Young



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# A Message from Assemblymember Cristina Garcia



## Breaking News

Assembly Bill 146 a bill idea submitted by the 5th grade class at Bell Gardens Elementary School has been signed into law and is effective as of January 1, 2016.

It encourages that the “Mexican Repatriation,” the unconstitutional deportation of over 1 million U.S. citizens and lawful residents of Mexican descent in California, in the 1930s, be included in student history textbooks and courses of study.

Paid for by Garcia for Assembly 2016, FPPC ID#1373564

## There Ought to Be a Law

I will be launching my third “**There Ought to Be a Law**” contest for residents of the 58th Assembly District. Constituents from the cities of Montebello, Pico Rivera, Commerce, Bell Gardens, Downey, Norwalk, Bellflower, Cerritos and Artesia are invited to submit ideas or proposals for a new state law. **Do You Have the Next Idea?**

*Cristina Garcia*

If you are interested in submitting an idea for 2016, please contact my district office at:

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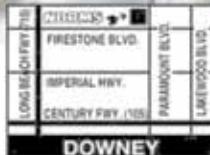
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