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Fernando Vasquez takes second turn as mayor, reveals goals for 2017

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY – Despite a bit of controversy that still hangs in the air over the future of Downey's Mayor Pro Tem position, it was a smooth transition for outgoing Mayor Alex Saab and incoming Mayor Fernando Vasquez last week.

The mayoral position in Downey annually transitions every December, with each mayor serving a single-year term. This year's mayoral transition occurred last Thursday, Dec. 15.

The transition ceremony began with some words from 2016 Mayor Saab.

"This year was particularly special because we celebrated our 60th anniversary," said Saab. "It really gives you an opportunity to reflect on where we were the last 60 years, and where we want to be the next 60 years."

Saab went on to highlight many of what he felt were the city's accomplishments from the last year.

Saab put the spotlight on the city's work within the medical field, which included the continued development and improvement of Rancho Los Amigos's campus.

"We have three incredible hospitals: Rancho, PIH Downey, and Kaiser. That makes us a medical hub in this area, and because of that we always want to be ahead of that curve and to really provide those incentives, those opportunities to come and get medical related jobs..."

Saab also took note of the Columbia Memorial Space Center's recent achievement to provide free admission to DUSD students, which Saab aggressively advocated for during his term as mayor.

"We've seen probably over 30% increase as a result, and we've also seen a bustle there, really thanks to the leadership of Ben Dickow," said Saab. "Really an enormous amount of activity there, and most importantly a greater exposure of the sciences to our kids."

Saab also commented that he was most proud of the re-inclusion of sports activities and programs for those with special needs at Apollo Park.

"It's been phenomenal, filled with volunteers, and we couldn't be more proud as a community, and that's something that touches all of our hearts," said Saab.

Saab also discussed public safety.

"You know last year we lost Ricky Galvez, and ...that was one of the most tragic events here in our city. We saw the worst in humanity when it happened, but we also saw the best in humanity; we saw a community come together..." said Saab. "What distinguishes our city from others is really our independence – our dependence on our own police department, fire department, and our own school district."

Saab's comments on public safety revolved around the implementation of the Police Civilian Volunteer Program, the Park Ranger Program, and the approval of 25 new license plate readers.

Saab also touched on increased public access to city hall, and the expansion of business within the city, including the Downey Promenade.

Along with being presented with the traditional gavel and scrapbook that is given to outgoing Downey mayors, Saab was also honored by LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn, the offices of U.S. Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard and Senator Tony Mendoza, Assembly member Cristina Garcia, the Cerritos College Board of Trustees, Downey Unified School District, Downey Chamber of Commerce, Downey Rose Float Association, and several of the surrounding cities.

Mayor Vasquez Lays out Goals for 2017

Shortly after being sworn in, new Mayor Fernando Vasquez gave his first mayoral address, using the opportunity to lay out a few ambitious goals for the coming year.

Vasquez quickly tackled public safety in his address.

"Let me make one thing very clear here today: Downey is because of our local police and fire department, and we will continue to have our local police and fire department as long as I am mayor in the city," said Vasquez.

Vasquez announced several police and emergency response upgrades, including unveiling an intriguing "Smart 911" system, which residents will be able to sign up for within the next year.

"You will be able to register who your healthcare provider is, who your local doctor is, what medications you are taking..." said Vasquez. "When our local fire department is responding to the scene, the more information they have available to them allows us to be able to troubleshoot things more accurately...When we get to a scene we already know which hospital to transport a patient to as



contracted with their healthcare insurance. It allows us also to be able to bill more accurately, and help respond more efficiently."

Vasquez also spent a fair amount of time speaking on park improvements, including the addition of a futbol court to Furman Park.

With the new court also comes potential new programming.

"Rather than having kids just running around chasing a soccer ball, we're going to introduce them to soccer, and part of that is we're also going to get them coached," said Vasquez. "One of the neat things about this is its twofold. We're going to reach out to all the local high schools – public and private – in the community...what we're going to do is get local students and local soccer players who want to get a coaching license, class F which is the introduction level... You have local students, local high schools public and private that are going to get their coaching license, then get the opportunity to implement that with the local fourth and fifth graders."

The ambitious eight-week program will also include a skill assessment, with standout players being linked to a professional soccer academy.

Vasquez also spent time speaking on the Ride and Stride event, which he plans to expand with a health care component.



Grammy winner Robert Cray booked for Downey Theatre

Five-time Grammy Award-winning Robert Cray Band performs live in concert at the Downey Theatre Saturday, March 11, at 8 p.m.

Robert Cray has created a sound that rises from American roots and arrives today both fresh and familiar. In just over 40 years Cray and his band have recorded 20 studio releases, 15 of which have been on the Billboard charts, and played bars, concert halls, festivals and arenas around the world.

Cray is considered to be one of the most expressive vocalists and impressive guitarists on the contemporary rhythm and Blues scene drawing from R&B, rock, pop, and jazz.

Cray's musical resume reads like a who's who in contemporary music. He's played with a cross section of greats from a multitude of genres, including Chuck Berry, Keith Richards, Eric Clapton, and Tina Turner among others, and mentors like John Lee Hooker and B.B. King. These unique collaborations cement Cray's unique status as an artist who bridges the gap between R&B, Blues and rock.

Four years ago Cray was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

Tickets for Robert Cray Band are on sale now at the Downey Theatre Box Office. For tickets and information call (562) 861-8211 or visit online at DowneyTheatre.com.



The Miss Downey 2016 Royal Court, pictured here at the Downey Christmas Parade, was pinned by Downey city officials in November.

Miss Downey Emely Lopez, Princess Christina Ledezma, Princess Hannah Handers, Princess Senovia Villatoro and Princess Linden Hausmann, Miss Teen Downey Marissa Padilla, Princess Giselle Garcia, Princess Ashley Rivas, Princess Michelle Vilarino, Junior Miss Downey Ava Melsh-Fountain, Princess Laila Sabir, Princess Jacqueline Rodriguez and Little Miss Downey Mia Vargas, Princess Celine Bautista and Princess Madeline Saldana. Miss Downey Royalty represent the Downey Rose Float Association at many city and chamber of commerce events, in addition to raising funds for the entry in the 2017 Tournament of Roses Parade, "The Gold Rush."

Photo by Pam Chambers

Rose float decorating begins Monday

The Downey Rose Float Association will start decorating their entry in the Tournament of Roses Parade on Monday, Dec. 26.

Keeping in the theme of the Tournament of Roses, Echoes of Success, this year's entry is titled "The Gold Rush." It will feature a fully functioning roller coaster.

Decoration week will be December 26 through January 1 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the float site, 13030 Erickson, Downey.

The parade is Jan. 2 and begins at 8 a.m.

The Tournament of Roses has had a "Never on Sunday" tradition since 1893, the first year since the beginning of the Tournament, that New Year's Day fell on a Sunday. The Tournament wanted to avoid frightening horses that would be hitched outside churches and thus interfering with worship services so the events were moved to the next day, January 2. Though horses are no longer outside local churches, the tradition remains to this day.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 61°

Saturday 57°

Sunday 58°

THINGS TO DO



Cash'd Out

Friday - Santa Fe Springs Swap Meet, 7 pm

Tribute concert to the late Johnny Cash, featuring the band Cash'd Out.



Holiday Concert

Saturday - Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 3 pm

Bands, choirs and dance companies from the many cultures of the region celebrate the season.



Rudolph: The Musical

Saturday - Dolby Theatre, 10:30 am

All your favorite Christmas characters come to life in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical."



A Cinderella Christmas

Saturday - Pasadena Playhouse, 12 pm and 4 pm

The timeless tale of Cinderella, featuring comedy, dancing, magic and contemporary music.



Tidepool Walk

Saturday - Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, 11:30 am

Join aquarium staff on an outdoor walk on the rocks to see animals in their natural habitat.

TWEETS OF THE WEEK

@Multi_American: Dozens of people at LA County supervisors mtg as county officials prepare to vote on whether to fund legal defense for immigrants

@CarolKearnsLA: Great to see Furman Park green again after a dry summer

Follow us!
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The Downey Association of Realtors recently elected and installed their 70th President of the Association. Mario Acevedo, Realtor and manager of Re/Max College Park, will take his leadership position on January 1, 2017. If you need to reach Mario, you may contact him at (562) 556-1965



The Downey Association of Realtors awarded Eric Pierce, Realtor at Century 21 My Real Estate, with the Service to Community Award. Eric can be reached at (562) 927-2626.

Bellflower schools borrow from Google to spur student creativity

BELLFLOWER – Alana Flores, 11, loves “Legend of Zelda,” but wanted to find out how the popular video game would need to be restructured if the hero and villain were to swap places.

Gioanni Hurst, 13, wanted to write a movie script, Anneke Buurma, 12, wanted to write an encouraging song and Gabriel Dao, 13, wanted to build a beam that would automatically balance a ball.

So they did it – all of them.

The students, who attend a Friday enrichment program at the Home Education Independent Study Academy at Bellflower Unified’s Las Flores Educational Center to supplement their homeschooling, engaged in projects of their own devising for about 90 minutes every Friday this fall.

The “Genius Hour” program is modeled on Google’s highly successful employee motivational tool. At Google, associates set their own projects for 20 percent of their time, a chance to let their creativity leap past workplace boundaries. The effort has led to such innovations as Gmail.

Now, teachers like Bellflower Unified’s Leah Moak are using the same idea to provide students with lessons in research, critical

thinking and resourcefulness. Students created a driving question and then conducted research that led to a product. At the end of the semester, they gave presentations on their products.

“They love doing it,” said Moak, an 11-year BUSD teacher who started at Las Flores last year. “The biggest hurdle we’ve found is getting them to be realistic with their products, but we didn’t want to shoot down any ideas.”

In fact, Moak said those heightened expectations led to an unsuspected benefit.

“We learned it’s not really about the product. It’s about the mindset,” she said. “When you face a hurdle, what are you going to do? What direction are you going to take?”

For example, Flores realized during her project that she couldn’t rebuild Zelda to match her vision in a semester. But she could create a blog and engage the Zelda online community with her ideas.

“The goal of the blog is to educate people. It’s about perspective. I like studying perspective and I wanted to give people a new perspective on the game’s villain, because he’s very misunderstood,” Flores said. “I’ve reached out to a lot of Zelda fans.”

Flores said she sees her goal as a long-term project to pursue over the next few years.

“I’ve learned that people’s minds are powerful,” she added. “Whatever they’re passionate about, they can do. So reaching out to them is really the most important thing.”

Buurma said she wrote her song as a way of helping people deal with challenges.

“I wanted to be able to encourage people using my gift. When I listen to certain songs, it encourages me to deal with different challenges, like

homework overload or my brother annoying me, and just being able to get through it with a better attitude,” Buurma said.

She said the project taught her perseverance.

“I’ve never written a song beginning to end before,” she said.

Dao said he chose the balance beam project because he wants to go into robotics. The effort was frustrating when his coding didn’t perform consistently. He was dogged about making adjustments to get the results he needed.

“The greatest moment was when it actually balanced the ball where I wanted it to,” he said.

Hurst initially wanted to write and shoot a movie, but decided to tackle her project in steps.

“I didn’t have enough time to do all of it now,” she said.

She completed her script – acting out a section with classmates during her presentation – and now plans to take on the challenges of directing and acting during the next semester. The movie is a thriller.

“I enjoy scary movies and I asked a couple of my classmates and they said they enjoy the same thing. So not just me but other people my age enjoy things that are thrillers or horror movies.

But I didn’t want to make it too scary because then not everybody would watch it,” she said.

Eighth-grader German Garcia, who created a website to help new players learn Pokémon Go, said he liked the freedom students had to choose their own projects.

“We could be creative. We could do anything we wanted,” he said.

“We could integrate our passions,” Buurma added.

Moak said she will tinker with the program during the next semester, using lessons gained this time to help students focus on their goals and keep up with the demands of the research.

But already, district officials are applauding the success of a tool that has teachers focusing on guiding enthusiastic student researchers as they explore new frontiers.

“This kind of innovative approach is at the heart of our Las Flores program,” Superintendent Dr. Brian Jacobs said. “It starts with idea of enrichment Fridays, where students have the opportunity to explore elective-style interests to supplement their home studies. Now, with Genius Hour, there’s an entirely new vista of opportunities opening up.”

Downey man selected as Westminster Dog Show judge

DOWNEY – A Downey man has been selected to work as a judge at the 141st annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show taking place next February in New York City.

The two-day, all-breed dog show will feature daytime judging

from among nearly 2,800 dogs representing 202 breeds.

John Ramirez’s interest in purebred dogs began in early childhood and grew into showing and breeding St. Bernards. He eventually got involved with Skye Terriers and Persian cats.

Over the years he has owned and shown English Toy Spaniels, Pugs and Chihuahuas. He currently owns and shows French Bulldogs.

Ramirez began judging in the early 1970s and has judged all over the world. He is licensed to judge the Working and Toy groups and several terrier breeds.

This is his third judging assignment at Westminster. The competition will be broadcast live on FS1.



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A Visit from St. Nicholas

By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds;
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,

With a little old driver so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too—

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.

His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Jack Campbell, civic leader and volunteer, passes away

DOWNEY – Longtime Downey resident and community leader Jack Campbell passed away Dec. 13.

Born in Iowa in 1923, he enlisted in the Army in 1943 and served on the German front in WWII. After resuming Civilian Life, Campbell moved to California where he settled into a fruitful business and philanthropic lifestyle.

His long history of volunteer activity includes co-founding Downey Youth Football in 1958, which later became Downey Pop Warner Football, Inc.

In 1982, he co-founded the California Highway Patrol (CHP) 11-99 Foundation, which distributes emergency financial assistance to current, retired, and fallen in the line of duty CHP employees and families.

Campbell served as past president and treasurer for the CHP 11-99 Foundation and also volunteered as past chairperson and treasurer for the Downey Regional Medical Center, Memorial Trust Foundation and Downey Police and Fire Foundation.

As founder, president and chief executive officer of Campbell Lodging, Inc., Campbell built a successful business which produced over 100 hotels in more than 10 states. He was honored for his devotion of time and talent in strengthening the lodging industry when he received the California Hotel and Lodging Association (CH&LA) Industry Volunteer award in 2003 and again as the 21st recipient of the CH&LA

Hall of Fame award in 2007.

Throughout his time as part of CH&LA, he served on the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Board of Directors for many years. He was instrumental in the stewardship of CH&LA's Educational Foundation investments, in addition to CH&LA's Employee Retirement Plan.

Jack is survived by his wife Peggy, children Frances, Doreen, Alan, Susan and Marty, as well as 15 grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his son Steven.

A private celebration of life will be held in Rancho Mirage at Morningside Country Club February 4.



Rotary Club of Downey held its last meeting of the year Tuesday, distributing Christmas gifts to children from local schools.

Go Metro for the holidays!

Metro Briefs

GATEWAY CITIES

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Going to the Rose Parade or Rose Bowl Game? Make it easy...Go Metro! With numerous bus and rail options available, you can start the New Year with stress-free travel. And if you're celebrating during the holidays, you can get home safely with free service on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Go Metro to LA Football
Metro is the smart choice for fans attending football games at the LA Memorial Coliseum. Metro provides frequent bus and rail service to the stadium, so you won't get caught in traffic or miss a minute of the action. To plan your trip and find the route that's best for you, visit metro.net/gameday.

New U-Pass Program Aimed at College Students
Metro recently launched a program that upgrades an existing student's college ID into a transit pass through a special sticker with smart-chip technology. U-Pass is a safe, speedy and secure way to travel to and from school with unlimited rides on all Metro Rail and bus lines. To find out if your college is participating, visit metro.net/college or contact your school's transit administrator.

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SPORTS: Downey wrestlers win their own tournament

By Mark Fetter
Contributor

DOWNEY – The Downey High School wrestling team hosted the Viking Invitational Tournament this last weekend and won their own tournament.

Downey accumulated 222.5

points and had nine different wrestlers place at their respective weight classes.

Millikan placed second with 214 points, Paramount placed third with 177.5 points, Valencia placed fourth with 161 points and Pioneer Valley placed fifth with 157 points. Grand Terrace

placed sixth with 149 points, Alemany placed seventh with 130 points, Coachella Valley placed eighth with 120 points, John Glenn placed ninth with 115.5 points and Livingston placed tenth with 99.5 points, respectively.

Viking 106 pounder Jonathan

Prata finished first after pinning Tony Odenbaugh of Grand Terrace at the 3:23 mark of the second period. Dilan Ajtun took first place at 113 pounds after he defeated Israel Galvan of Valencia 11-3 and Downey's Abraham Cervantes also placed fifth at 113 pounds as the Vikings' second entry. Roland Dominguez took first place at 120 pounds after he defeated Rajanvir Chahal of Livingston 6-4 and Downey's Joshua Lopez also placed fifth at 120 pounds as the Vikings' second entry.

Downey's Matthew Morales finished sixth at 126 pounds, Nathan Martinez also finished sixth at 132 pounds and Armando Padilla finished first at 138 pounds after he pinned John Fuentes of Millikan at the 1:50 mark of the first period.

Adrian Segovia finished second at 145 pounds, Nicholas Arellano finished first after he defeated Ben Gould of Valencia 6-2 at 171 pounds, Daniel Martinez finished fourth at 195 pounds and Adrian Gerra finished fourth at 220 pounds.

Downey will begin S.G.V.L. competition in January. Paramount and cross-town rival Warren both seem to have strong teams in early tournament competitions.

■ The Warren High School

wrestling team competed in and won the Ed Springs Classic Wrestling Tournament at Brea-Olinda High School last weekend.

Warren accumulated 327 points en route to the victory and had seven wrestlers place at their respective weight classes.

Aliso Viejo finished second, Dos Pueblos finished third, Peninsula finished fourth, Diamond Bar finished fifth, Ventura finished sixth, Valencia of Placentia finished seventh, San Clemente finished eighth, Hemet finished ninth and Rim of the World finished tenth to round out the top ten finishers, respectively.

Bear 106 pounder Carlos Vasquez finished fifth, Joshua Mendoza finished first at 120 pounds after he defeated Andrew Garcia of Chino 4-0 and Matthew Lopez finished second at 126 pounds after he was defeated by Michael Cardiel of Diamond Bar 6-0 in the championship final.

Warren 160 pounder Carlos Durazo finished fourth, 171 pounder Michael Bautista finished third and 195 pounder Kenneth Gonzalez also finished third. The Bears' Alexis Galvan took home the TMI upper weight Most Valuable Wrestler of the tournament honors after he finished with a 4-0 record after pinning all four of his opponents.

Coach Brogden, his staff and wrestlers are all looking forward to the start of the S.G.V.L. dual meet season. Paramount and cross-town rival Downey have also looked strong in early tournament competition.

■ The Downey High School girls' water polo team will be hosting a water polo clinic at the Downey Aquatics Center next Tuesday, Dec. 27. The goal of the clinic is to get more kids in the community interested in water polo at a younger age.

The clinic will be hosted by Downey High School's new girls' water polo coach Uriel Villa and his sister, Brenda Villa. Brenda Villa is the most decorated women's water polo athlete in history. She is a four-time Olympic medalist, FINA women's water polo player of the decade and an NCAA champion. Brenda Villa is offering a chance for the youth of Downey to get in the water with her and learn about the sport she loves.

The clinic is free and the only requirement is to get in the water, have fun and play! There will be five certified lifeguards on deck at all times so there is no need to worry. The clinic will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Downey Aquatics Center located on the west side of the Downey High School campus. Questions can be directed to head coach Uriel Villa at villapolo88@hotmail.com.

Coach Uriel Villa and his sister Brenda Villa hope to see you at the Downey Aquatics Center next Tuesday, December 27th, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for a day of water polo with four-time Olympian Brenda Villa.

■ The St. John Bosco High School football team defeated northern California champion Concord De La Salle, 56-33, last Saturday night in Sacramento to win the C.I.F. Open Division championship game.

With the win, the Braves finished their season with an overall record of 13-2 and a Trinity League record of 4-1. The Braves also finished their season ranked second in the nation and first in California.

The Braves defeated Upland 47-20 in the first round of the C.I.F. Division One playoffs on 11/11, defeated Santa Margarita 54-14 in the second round on 11/18, defeated Corona Centennial 49-47 in the semifinal round on 11/25 and defeated Mater Dei 42-28 in the C.I.F. Division One Final on 12/3.

In the De La Salle game, the Braves jumped out to an early lead and never looked back. St. John Bosco led at the end of the first quarter 21-14 and led at halftime 35-17. The Spartans pulled to within 42-27 as the third quarter came to an end. The Braves scored two more touchdowns in the fourth quarter and sealed their hard fought, 56-33 win.

Re-al Mitchell finished the game completing 18/20 pass attempts for 192 yards and two touchdowns. Terrence Beasley had 24 carries for 150 yards and Berkeley Holman had seven catches for 92 yards in the winning effort.

Coach Negro, his staff and fans are extremely proud of what this team has accomplished this season. This is St. John Bosco's second California state title in the last four years.



In Memory of Jean S. Brazelton

January 24, 1931 - December 19, 2016

Jean was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. She and her brother, Dr. George Neil Sausen, were raised by their loving parents George, Sr. and Florence. Despite growing up during the Great Depression, Jean enjoyed many exciting activities, such as ice skating during the winter and canoeing in the summer. She delighted in her

annual pilgrimages to camps in various states; she loved horseback riding, swimming in lakes, hiking, and cooking over an outdoor fire.

She graduated in 1952 from the College of St. Catherine, located in St. Paul, with a B.A. in English, and then she taught in a small farm town in southern Minnesota. In a bold move, she headed west to California in 1954, teaching high school English and Physical Education in San Bernardino and then in Whittier at California High School, and she later (when her children were older) took an English teaching position at St. Joseph High School in Lakewood.

In 1956 she travelled to Europe with a friend from Minnesota, enjoying an adventurous trip throughout many countries during her summer break, which foretold many more travel excursions in her future. This "travel bug" was passed onto her children, and she always encouraged them to be open to new experiences.

She had met the love of her life, her husband Robert (Bob), at a Catholic Alumni Club dance, and they married and settled in Downey in 1957, eventually raising 6 wonderful children and 12 grandchildren and staying very active in the community. Bob agreed to learn how to snow ski, which was a prerequisite before they tied the knot.

She ran a busy household, guiding her children in their various activities. She coached basketball teams, started a Great Books program at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, and participated in her own book group for over 40 years.

Jean demonstrated a strong commitment to community service, serving as a Downey Parks commission member, presiding over the Parish Council at O.L.P.H. Church, and doing charitable work for the Downey Soroptimist Club, a volunteer organization that seeks to improve the lives of women and girls.

She was an ideal teacher in both academics and in sports; utilizing her background, she helped her children navigate the waters of academia, often providing feedback on her children's writing assignments. In addition, she taught her children to ride bikes, to swim, to snow ski, to play tennis, and to ride horses. She guided her children through their developmental years, encouraging them to value literature and theatre arts. She even taught children at her kids' school how to folk dance.

We will always remember her infectious and positive spirit, generous heart, and concern for others. She made time in her busy schedule to counsel her children and friends, offering advice and listening to them. Her loving nature will live on through her family and friends.

Jean is survived by her husband Bob of nearly 60 years, her 6 children and their spouses, and her 12 grandchildren.

The funeral Mass and celebration of her life will be held on Friday, January 13, 2017, at 10:30 AM, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 10727 Downey Avenue, Downey, CA 90241. A reception will follow at Rio Hondo Country Club.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Downey Family YMCA. The Risher Mortuary website has Jean's obituary and provides the opportunity to post a message of condolence.

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Want to govern effectively, Mr. Trump?



By Lee H. Hamilton

As Mario Cuomo said, politicians campaign in poetry but have to govern in prose. Now we have a president-elect who campaigned in tweets...but still will have to govern in prose.

Donald Trump showed great skill as a campaigner, steering his campaign past a slew of professional politicians who underestimated him at every turn. Now the test is whether he can govern — that is, whether he can run the United States government, conduct foreign policy in treacherous times, and reshape domestic policy to fit his goals. This requires a very different set of skills from those he showed before the election.

So, like a few thousand other Americans, I'd like to give him some advice. Not on the substance of policy itself — that he'll handle himself — but on how to be effective at achieving what he'd like to achieve.

First, he has to set priorities. During the course of the campaign, according to The Washington Post, Donald Trump made 282 promises. He is not going to be able to deliver on them all.

So he'll need to set out his priorities with clarity and force. As the head of a vast federal establishment, clarity of objectives is crucially important in policy implementation. He cannot afford to sow confusion. Though this president-elect prides himself on unpredictability, conducting policy in an unpredictable way is the mark of a rogue state.

Unpredictability creates doubt about what he wants to achieve — both on Capitol Hill and among the vast number of people and agencies charged with

carrying out his policies — which in turn produces a race by elected officials to fill the clarity vacuum with their own agendas and prevents frontline agencies from planning. Many Americans and foreign governments have already been unnerved by the unexpected Twitter messages coming from President-Elect Trump; this will only make his job harder once he takes office.

Second, the president-elect must fix his conflict-of-interest challenge. Because of the extraordinary extent of his business interests, he has an unprecedented number of potential conflicts for a U.S. president. He will be negotiating policy with many people, agencies and countries where he or his business partners have a bottom-line stake in what happens.

If he does not fix this before he takes office, conflict-of-interest charges will dog him throughout his presidency and weaken, if not cripple, his effectiveness. He has to protect himself from charges that his actions as president are influenced by his personal financial interests. It won't be enough to put everything in a blind trust controlled by his children. As Newsweek recently pointed out, "every nation on Earth will know that doing business with the Trump Organization will one day benefit the family."

Third, President Trump will need to keep his majorities united. Given Republican dominance of Capitol Hill, he's in a strong position to get things done. But he'll have to keep his fellow Republicans on his side. Some Republican leaders are already separating themselves from his attack on the CIA analysis of Russian interference in the election. Showing respect for, and reaching out to, GOP lawmakers will matter.

So will considering a variety of different views and treating them with respect — which is how a pluralist democracy works. Knowing how to work cooperatively and accessibly with potential allies on Capitol Hill and throughout the D.C. power structure will be crucial to making his priorities a reality.

Finally, in order to do this, it's not enough simply to say "I want this." He has to take seriously the role of facts in the deliberative process. Members of Congress and others need to be able to defend their support for politically difficult proposals — and they cannot do this without factually based arguments.

Accurate information is necessary to make sound judgments about policy. Trump's decision not to regularly hear information from intelligence officials is worrisome. For a president to succeed, he needs to interact in a measured, sensible, reassuring way, and supply his allies with solid analysis and information, not guesses, instincts, opinions, and debunk-able theories.

A president who sets clear priorities, removes all doubt about potential conflicts of interest, and works responsibly with his allies on fact-driven policies can make good progress and achieve his goals.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Women deserve access to tampons, period

By Olivia Alperstein

For many women, getting a period for 3 to 8 days every month can be hellish — everything from bleeding, cramps, and fatigue to the humiliating march to the local store for tampons and pads.

But these women are incredibly lucky compared to thousands of marginalized Americans who lack adequate access to these products so fundamental to women's reproductive health.

In particular, women in prison face an uphill battle getting their hands on feminine hygiene products. Incarcerated people earn at most 75 cents a day, which has to be split between basic necessities like toothpaste and deodorant.

In prison, costs range from \$2.63 for 24 pads to over \$4 for eight tampons. That means giving up more than three days of wages for pads and nearly twice that much for tampons.

Most inmates simply can't afford it, and lack of access to menstrual supplies creates toxic choices for women.

Prisoners frequently either go without supplies, bleeding onto clothes they're then stuck with until the next laundry day, or end up using one tampon or pad for multiple days. Wearing an individual tampon or pad for more than the recommended maximum of eight hours increases the risk of bacterial or fungal infection as well as toxic shock syndrome, a rare but serious illness that can lead to death.

Plus, prison supplies are limited, and women's periods may sync up when they're in close quarters. That's hundreds, potentially thousands, of women all stuck with their periods at the same time facing tension surrounding limited tampon supplies. Even the last-resort option of stuffing toilet paper down your pants comes at a price, as toilet paper is rationed in prisons.

Going through your period in the privacy of your own home can be difficult enough. Going through your period in prison without

adequate access to supplies is beyond degrading — it's cruel.

Limiting access to feminine products in prisons is a form of abuse used to wield control over inmates and dehumanize them. Barring drastic policy changes, prison officials have little incentive to make tampons and pads easily available to all prisoners.

Homeless women also have a tremendous disadvantage when it comes to fundamental feminine hygiene. Unlike prisoners who have a weekly laundry day, homeless people who sleep on the streets can't afford to do laundry and have no place to shower.

This makes sanitation a real issue, especially during a period. Temporary housing locations are often overcrowded with limited resources to begin with. Homeless shelters don't automatically hand out free supplies, and people rarely think to donate them.

You can use toilet paper in public restrooms to line your underwear, but it's often the cheap, razor-thin kind that doesn't absorb much, and public facilities don't look kindly on homeless people. Some facilities still charge a quarter for one cheap tampon with a tough cardboard applicator, which is meant only for a light flow.

The average price for a small box of tampons or pads at a local pharmacy like CVS is at least \$5, which is even more out of reach.

Having the means to maintain basic hygiene is an issue of human dignity. Around the world, people are shamed, ostracized, and even physically punished for having their periods. In the supposedly enlightened United States, millions lack proper access to menstrual supplies.

Marginalized groups like incarcerated and homeless women risk losing their dignity once a month like clockwork, all for the want of a tampon or pad that should be provided for free by prisons and housing assistance programs. Access to feminine hygiene products is a critical part of women's reproductive health, and it needs to be treated as such.

Olivia Alperstein is the Communications and Policy Associate of Progressive Congress

Stop labeling Downey neighborhoods

Dear Editor:

After driving down Rives Avenue one day and seeing a new pillar reading "Orange Estates" I, too, like Mr. Rodriguez could not believe my eyes!

I have lived in Downey my entire life and although I know different areas of our city are referred to by various names, I was shocked that we were now labeling those areas. Or is it only one area we are labeling? I haven't noticed this type of signage anywhere else in our city. I agree with Mr. Rodriguez that we should be known as Downey collectively.

It is unfathomable to me that we have to waste our hard-earned city dollars by placing a sign in front of an area of houses. Not to mention the fact that the sign is adjacent to a boarded up house in bad need of attention.

I would like to know who approved this type of poor choice for wasting our tax dollars. Are we going to start putting up "Yankey Circle" or "South Downey" or other things? I did not vote for this type of signage.

I believe I will begin to attend the City Council meetings so that I can see exactly what is going on and who is in charge of this flagrant waste of the taxpayers' hard-earned money. Downey is Downey, not "Orange Estates", etc.

It makes me sad to think that this is what our city has become, a city of segregated areas instead of our community.

Julie Bliss
Downey

The dangers of big philanthropy

By Chuck Collins

It's the season of giving.

When you hear about a billionaire "giving back" — like Nike founder Phil Knight's \$400 million gift to Stanford, or hedge funder John Paulsen's \$400 million donation to Harvard — do you feel a warm glow?

They could've kept their money and bought another house or private jet, you might think. But what if you heard that the tax write-offs billionaires claim for gifts like these force the rest of us to shell out more?

Suddenly that glow doesn't feel so warm.

Compare that generosity to what you've probably seen in your own community. In every small town in America — at the local convenience store or diner — there's "the jar," a special collection for someone who needs an operation or has faced one of life's misfortunes.

Everyone who can chips in. No one writes it off their taxes.

Keeping score that way would be as unseemly as asking for a tax break for coaching a neighborhood youth sports team, volunteering at a shelter, or making a casserole for someone coming home from the hospital.

The wealthy, on the other hand, use the tax deductions that come with mega-gifts to dramatically reduce, and sometimes eliminate, their tax obligations. They do it at the behest of "wealth defense advisers" — tax lawyers, accountants, and estate and trust planners — whose job is to maximize their clients' wealth and minimize their taxes.

Those headline-making gifts you hear about may be motivated by a generous impulse, but they're also another tool of tax avoidance — especially when it comes to donating appreciated stocks, artwork, and land, which help them avoid paying capital gains taxes.

The rest of us have a stake in these gifts. For every dollar donated to charity by a wealthy individual, everyone else effectively chips in 40 to 50 cents. When their tax bills go down, we pick up the slack to pay for public services such as infrastructure, research, and defense.

Unfortunately, this is the wave of the future. More and more, our country's charitable giving is dominated and controlled by billionaire mega-donors, their foundations, and donor-advised funds, according to a report I coauthored for the Institute for Policy Studies.

Between 2003 and 2013, itemized contributions from people making \$10 million or more increased by 104 percent. The number of private grant-making foundations, mostly established by wealthy individuals and their families, has doubled since 1993. Today there are over 80,000.

Meanwhile, charitable giving by low and middle-income donors has steadily declined, reflecting stagnant wages, declining homeownership, and growing economic insecurity by low- and middle-income families. From 2003 to 2013, itemized charitable deductions by donors making less than \$100,000 declined by over a third.

This top-heavy philanthropy poses a danger to charities, too. It makes their funding less predictable and pressures them to focus on wooing a finite, relatively small number of mega-donors, rather than on doing the important work many of them do.

But the largest peril is for our democracy. Unchecked, private foundations can become blocks of concentrated, unaccountable power with considerable clout in shaping our laws and culture. They can become extensions of the power, privilege, and influence of a handful of rich families.

In this season of giving, we'll hear plenty about billionaires "giving back" through donations to education, the arts, health, and medicine. But let's not lose sight of the fact that you and I are subsidizing the charitable choices of the wealthy.

Maybe we'd all be better off if these billionaires just paid their fair share of taxes.

Crony capitalism made Rick Perry our energy secretary

By Jim Hightower

Rick Perry has taken quite a tumble since being governor of Texas. He was a twice-failed GOP presidential wannabe and then ended up being a rejected contestant on Dancing with the Stars, the television show for has-been celebrities.

But now, having kissed the ring of Donald Trump, Perry is being lifted from the lowly role of twinkle-toed TV hooper to — get this — taking charge of our government's nuclear arsenal.

That's a position that usually requires some scientific knowledge and experience. But as we're learning from Trump's other cabinet picks, the key qualification that Trump wants his public servants to have is a commitment to serve the private interests of corporate power.

That's why Perry — a devoted practitioner of crony capitalism and a champion of oligarchy — has been rewarded with this position.

As governor, Perry went to extraordinary lengths to let the fossil fuel giant Energy Transfer Partners run a pipeline through the ecologically fragile, natural wonders of Texas' pristine Big Bend region. In fact, he rammed it right down the throats of local people, who were almost unanimously opposed.

Perry then accepted a \$6 million campaign donation — i.e., a payoff — from the company's corporate boss, who later made Perry a paid member of the corporation's board of directors.

Perry also privatized a state-run, low-level nuclear waste facility, turning it over to Waste Control Specialists, a firm owned by a major campaign contributor. Then he let the corporation double the amount of waste dumped there, while reducing its legal liability for damages.

Finally, after taking even more cash from the owner, Perry pushed to let him put high-level nuclear waste in the dump.

Rick Perry has zero expertise or experience for the job of energy secretary, but he has plenty at stifling the American people and our environment.

Jim Hightower is a radio commentator, writer, and public speaker. He's also the editor of the populist newsletter, The Hightower Lowdown, and a member of the Public Citizen Board.

The Downey Patriot STAFF

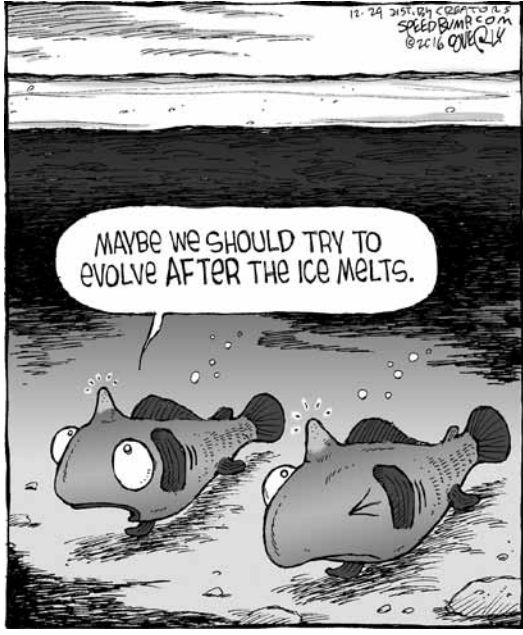
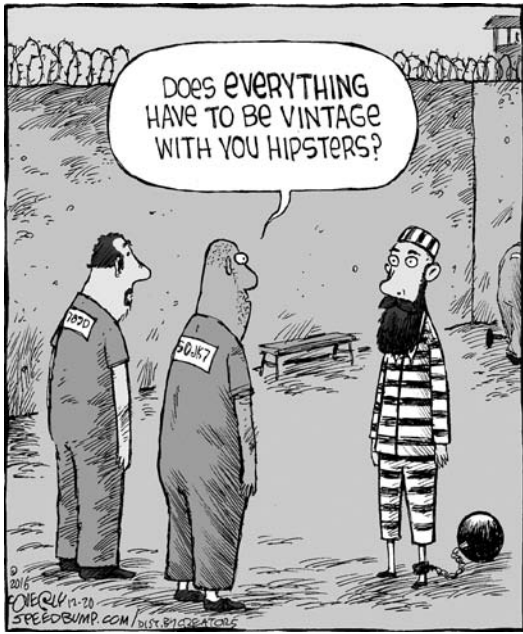
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SPEED BUMP

DAVE COVERLY



Downey Community Calendar

EVENTS FOR DECEMBER

Monday, Dec. 26: Green Task Force meeting, City Hall (2nd floor training room), 5 p.m.

CITY MEETINGS

- 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 6:30pm: Planning Commission, Council Chamber at City Hall.
- 1st Tue., 4:00pm.: Recreation and Community Services Commission, Council Chamber, City Hall.
- 1st Tue., 6:00pm: Emergency Preparedness Committee, at Fire Station No. 1, 12222 Paramount Blvd.
- 2nd & 4th Tue., 6:30pm: City Council, Council Chamber.
- 3rd Tue., 6:30pm: Library Advisory Board, at Downey City Library.
- 4th Mon., 5 pm: Green Task Force, at City Hall.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

MONDAYS

- 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 2, at Downey United Methodist Church, call 869-6478.
- 2nd Mon., 11 am: American Legion Auxiliary #270, at United Methodist Church, call 304-3439.
- 3rd Mon., 11:30 am: Downey Newcomers Club, call Nancy 806-1782.
- 4th Mon., 7:30 pm: Downey Numismatists, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.

TUESDAYS

- 9:30 am: Downey Seniors Club, at Apollo Park, call Irene Vallini at 328-7039.
- 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.
- 12 pm: Rotary Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Russell Skersick 929-3710.
- 6 pm: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, contact Salvador Cervantes: tmsalcpuede@gmail.com.
- 7 pm: Downey Knights of Columbus Bingo, at 11231 Rives Ave., call 923-1932.
- 7 pm: Healing Room and Prayer, at Desert Reign Church 11610 Lakewood Blvd, call 861-6011.
- 7:30 pm: Downey Master Chorale, at Cornerstone Church, contact info@downeymasterchorale.org.
- 1st Tues., 7:30 am: Gangs Out of Downey, at City Hall training room.
- 2nd Tues., 3:30 pm: Keep Downey Beautiful, at City Hall, call 905-7103.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 6 pm: Sertoma Club, at Rio Hondo Event Center, call 927-6438.
- 2nd Tues., 6 pm: Downey Fly Fishers, at Apollo Park, call 425-7936.
- 3rd Tues., 6:30 pm: Community Emergency Response Team meeting, Fire station 1, 12222 Paramount.
- 3rd Tues., 6 pm: American Legion #270, at Sizzler Restaurant, call 544-0372.
- Tues., Thurs. & Sat., 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza 652-4399

WEDNESDAYS

- 7 am: Kiwanis Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.
- 1 pm: Women's Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call Marie Puch at 869-4366.
- 7 pm: Out Post 132 Royal Rangers, at Desert Reign Church, call 928-8000.
- 1st Wed., 11 am: Woman's Club of Downey, call Cheryl Olson 833-8954.
- 1st Wed., 11:30 am: Downey Coordinating Council, Community Center, call Bobbi Bruce 440-5416.
- 1st Wed., 7:30 pm: Downey Stamp Club, at Maude Price School cafeteria, call 928-3028.
- 2nd Wed., 11:30 am: Christian Women's Club, at Los Amigos Country Club, call Helen 864-7319.
- 2nd Wed., 7:30 pm: Downey Model A Club, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, call 928-4132.
- 3rd Wed.: Downey Dog Obedience Club, for information please call Gina 869-5213 or Valerie 420-2972.
- 3rd Wed., 10 am: Los Angeles County Quilters Guild, at Women's Club, call (310) 604-0725.
- 3rd Wed., 10 am: OLPH Women's Guild, at OLPH School Auditorium, contact Armida Lugo, (562) 715-6142.
- 3rd Wed., 6 pm: American Business Women's Association, Rio Hondo Country Club, call Barbara 863-2192.
- 4th Wed., 12:00 pm: Retired Federal Employees, at Barbara J Riley Center, call 943-5513.
- 4th Wed., 7:30 pm: US Coast Guard Aux. Flotilla 5-10, First Presbyterian Church, call Brian 419-5420.
- Wed. & Fri., 10:15 am: Senior Bingo, at Apollo Park, call 904-7223

THURSDAYS

- 7:30 am: Connections Networking, at Bob's Big Boy, for info., call Nick Smith, 861-5222.
- 7:30 am.: Soroptimist Int'l of Downey, for information, call Mia Vasquez, 806-3217.
- 9:30 am: Take off Pounds Sensibly, at Barabara Riley Senior Center, call (800) 932-8677.
- 12 pm: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 923-0971.
- 12 pm: Optimist Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center.
- 6:30 pm: Downey United Masonic Lodge # 220, 8244 3rd St., call 862-4176.
- 7 pm: Troop 351, Boy Scouts of America, at First Baptist Church, call 776-3388.
- 1st Thurs., 12:00 pm: Downey Christian & Professional Luncheon, Sizzler's Restaurant, call James 310-1335.
- 1st Thurs., 7:30 pm: The Downey Amateur Radio Club, at First Baptist Church room 120.
- 2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm: Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club, call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.
- 2nd & 4th Thurs., 6 pm: Lions Club, at Coco's, call Lenora (310) 283-9825.
- 3rd Thurs., 4 pm: Public Works Committee, at City Hall Training Room.
- 3rd Thurs., 6 pm: Downey CIPAC, at Sizzler's Restaurant, call Rich Tuttle 413-6045.
- 4th Thurs., 10 am: Assistance League, at Casa De Parley Johnson, call 869-0232.
- 4th Thurs., 7:30 pm: Downey Historical Society programs, at Community Center, call 862-2777.

FRIDAYS

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

SATURDAYS

- 9 am: Farmers Market, Downey Avenue at 3rd Street, call 904-7246.
- 4th Sat., 12:00 pm: Downey Arts Coalition, email contact@downeyarts.org.

On This Day...

Dec. 22, 1864: During the Civil War, Union Gen. William T. Sherman sent a message to President Abraham Lincoln from Georgia, saying, "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah."

1984: New York City resident Bernhard Goetz shot four black youths on a Manhattan subway, claiming they were about to rob him.

2000: Pop singer Madonna married film director Guy Ritchie in Scotland. (The couple divorced in 2008.)

2010: President Barack Obama signed a law allowing gays for the first time in history to serve openly in America's military.

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)

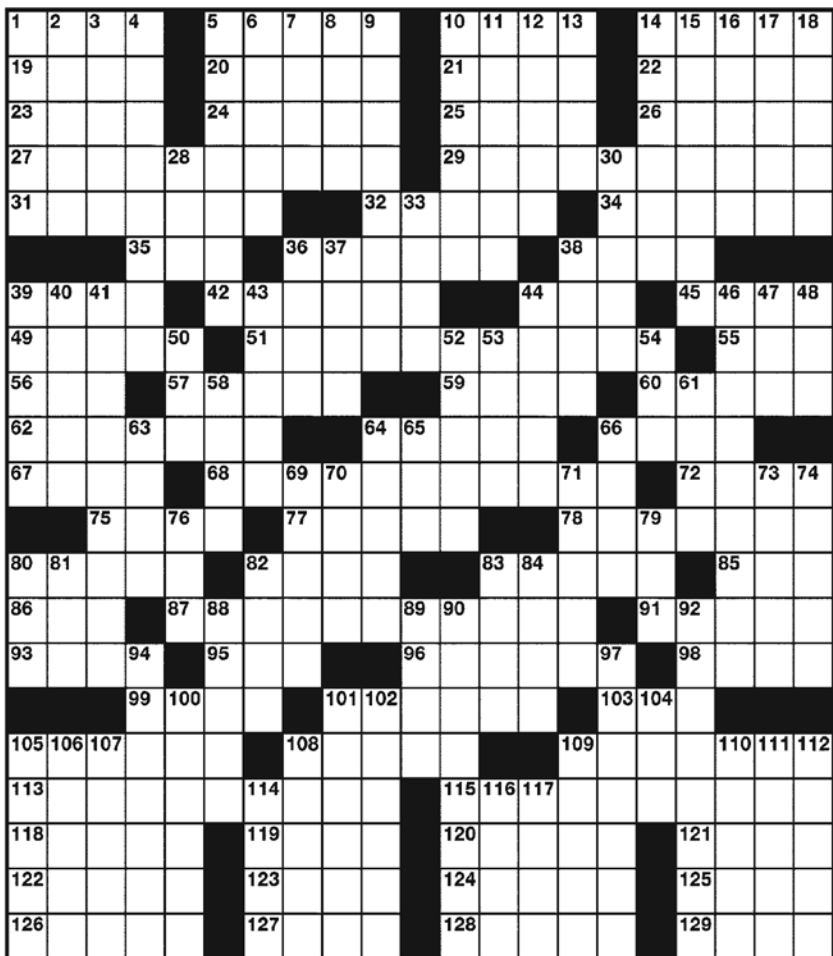
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by Gail Grabowski

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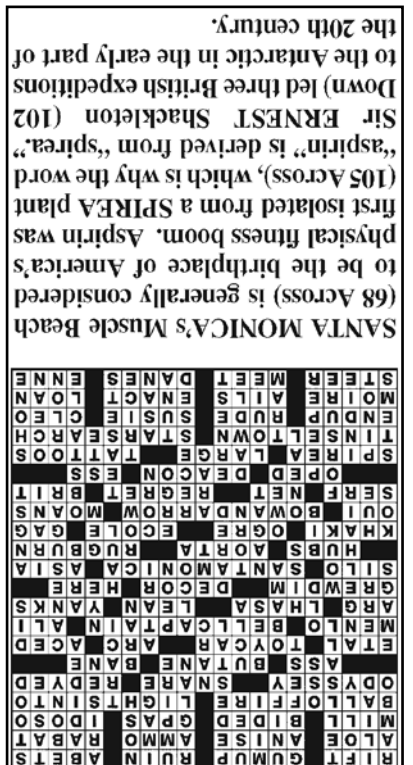
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Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

Many times every day, I walk down the hall of my office as my nurse is measuring a patient's height. I often hear the same reaction: "I didn't used to be that short!"



We do shrink as we age, usually starting around the age of 40. Overall, men will lose about two inches by age 80, and women three inches. This happens because the bones of our spine lose density, and the gel-like disks that separate each vertebra get worn down and thin. As a result, our spinal column actually becomes shorter. This spine deterioration, compounded by muscle loss, can also cause that hunched-over look (cervical kyphosis).

As a woman approaches menopause, rapidly decreasing levels of estrogen

can cause loss of bone mass, and after menopause, bone loss actually outpaces the building of new bone. This loss of bone density and associated loss of height is caused by osteoporosis. Women over 70 who lose height rapidly have a greater chance of fracturing a hip as well.

Shrinking is not inevitable, and happens differently for everyone. Those who live in the city shrink less than those who live in the country. Educated people shrink less than those who are uneducated. It's likely that these types of differences are connected to accompanying habits such as drinking, smoking and inactivity.

What can we do to slow this height loss?

- Women over 50 should supplement their daily diet with 1,000 mg of calcium, as well as at least 600 units of vitamin D, as this helps the body to absorb the calcium. The best food sources of calcium are almonds, broccoli, kale, salmon, and soy products like tofu. Dietary sources of vitamin D include oily fish, egg yolks, and fortified milk.

- Exercise is critical. What we do *after* the age of 40 appears to have the biggest impact. Those who have always exercised, or even those who start exercising just after turning 40, lose only about half as much height as those

who never exercise, or stop working out during middle age. The best exercise is weight bearing, like running, jumping, or strength training. Whatever puts stress on your bones will signal the body to add new cells and strengthen the bones.

- Quit smoking. Smoking works in several different ways to cause bone loss, including by lowering estrogen levels.

- More than one alcoholic drink per day also works in several ways to cause bone loss, including by blocking the absorption of calcium in the stomach.

Osteoporosis, resulting in loss of height and sometimes bone fractures, used to be considered a normal part of aging. We now understand it to be preventable and treatable. Proven strategies include consuming adequate amounts of calcium and vitamin D, participating in weight-bearing exercise, avoiding tobacco, limiting alcohol, and using medication when appropriate.

Talk to your doctor about an appropriate strategy for you.

L.A. County offers tips for a healthy holiday season

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) offers these useful tips for keeping in good health and positive spirits during this holiday season. These tips provide simple yet powerful actions people can do to help make the holiday season healthier and more enjoyable.

"Let this holiday season be joyful and as stress-free as possible," said Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH, Interim Health Officer for Los Angeles County. "The holidays bring parties, luncheons and social gatherings. Let's be mindful and enjoy once-a-year holiday foods, but in smaller portions. Try incorporating small changes in your day to increase your opportunities to move more, eat healthier, and find ways to reduce stress for you and your family."

Healthy Holiday Tips:

Enjoy those once-a-year holiday treats – just eat less of them. It's possible to indulge without packing on the holiday pounds. Enjoy holiday food traditions in smaller portions. Choose less, weigh less.

Get moving – and not just at the gym. Park your car farther away from the store or shopping mall entrance. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Burn calories by turning your holiday cleaning into a workout.

Decorate safely. Holidays are the time to bring out the tinsel and lights, but accidents can happen when decorations go awry. Use flame-resistant or non-combustible materials to trim a tree. When you leave your home or go to bed, be sure to turn off or unplug lights and decorations indoors and outdoors.

Manage stress. The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health. Be mindful about over-committing and over-spending. Balance work, home and holiday parties. Set realistic expectations for yourself and your family. Try to get enough sleep each night to stay well rested, refreshed and ready to go!

Wash your hands. Germs can survive on door handles, railings and other surfaces you touch with your hands. Wash with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice), or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Don't skip meals. Skipping meals can cause you to over-eat and consume more calories than if you had small meals throughout the day. Start your day with a healthy breakfast – a key to long-term weight loss. Pack nuts, fruit and veggies to munch on before holiday gatherings to avoid over-eating.

Avoid foodborne illness by washing fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly, separating raw meat and poultry from other food, and using separate cutting boards, knives, and platters to prepare meats. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. When in doubt, throw it out.

Drink up – water, that is. Did you know that there are 22 packets of sugar in a regular 20-ounce soda? You wouldn't eat that many packs of sugar, so why would you drink them? Try fruit and herb-infused 'spa' water, sparkling water, or unsweetened tea for a satisfying thirst quencher that won't pour on the pounds.

Quit Tobacco. Don't let holiday stress trigger your cigarette cravings. Instead, brush your teeth, drink water, take deep breaths, chew sugar-free gum, or go for a walk. Call the California Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887) to talk to a supportive counselor who can offer help and a plan to quit for good.

Hearing loss among adults ages 20-69 has declined

Hearing loss among U.S. adults aged 20 to 69 has declined over the last decade, even as the number of older Americans continues to grow.

These findings, published this month in JAMA Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery, also confirm that hearing loss is strongly associated with age and other demographic factors such as sex, race/ethnicity, and education. Noise exposure, which is potentially preventable, was also significant but less strongly associated after adjustment for other factors.

To examine hearing loss trends over time in adults aged 20 to 69, researchers compared hearing health data collected as part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) over two time periods: 2011–2012 and 1999–2004. NHANES is a nationally representative health interview and examination survey of U.S. adults. NHANES participants listened to tones of various frequencies that were presented at different loudness levels.

The researchers found that the overall annual prevalence of hearing loss dropped slightly, from 16 percent to 14 percent, or 28 million adults, in the 1999–2004 period versus 27.7 million in the 2011–2012 period. This decline in absolute numbers was observed despite an increase in the population generally, and in the relative number of adults aged 50 to 69 in the more recent time period. The new results are consistent with previous findings showing improvements in hearing over time, when researchers compared NHANES data from 1999 to 2004 with data from 1959 to 1962.

"Our findings show a promising trend of better hearing among adults that spans more than half a century," said Howard J. Hoffman, M.A., first author on the paper and director of the NIDCD's Epidemiology and Statistics Program. "The decline in hearing loss rates among adults under age 70 suggests that age-related hearing loss may be delayed until later in life. This is good news because for those who do develop hearing loss, they will have experienced more quality years of life with better hearing than earlier generations."

The researchers do not know the reason why hearing loss prevalence is declining but speculate possible factors could include fewer manufacturing jobs, increased use of hearing protectors, less smoking, and advances in health including better medical care to manage risk factors associated with hearing loss.

Researchers found that age was the strongest predictor of hearing loss, with the greatest amount of hearing loss in the oldest age group surveyed (aged 60 to 69). Across all ages, men were about twice as likely as women to have hearing loss. In addition, lower education level and heavy use of firearms were associated with hearing loss. Non-Hispanic white adults were more likely to have hearing loss than adults in other ethnic groups, with non-Hispanic black adults having the lowest risk.

The researchers also found that age- and sex-adjusted hearing loss declined over the years for the averaged high frequencies (3–6 kilohertz) in both ears, and for speech frequencies (0.5–4 kilohertz) in one ear. People aged 70 and above, although not studied in this report, have the highest prevalence of hearing loss of any age group, according to the authors.

"Despite the benefits from the apparent delayed start of hearing loss, there will be an increased need for affordable hearing health care as the numbers of adults aged 70 and older continue to grow," said NIDCD Director James F. Battey, Jr., M.D., Ph.D. "NIDCD continues to prioritize research on hearing health care for adults, including approaches to make treatment more accessible and affordable to improve the quality of life for the millions of Americans with hearing loss."

Alternative Medicine: The Secret is in the Heart

By Marcela Arrieta

Today we're going to evoke one of the most powerful energy centers in the human energetic anatomy. It is said to hold the secrets of happiness, health and possesses restorative properties. This center is the heart chakra. At its very core it emits emotions of peace, compassion, patience, joy, etc. Some of the highest vibrational feelings a human being can experience and emanate.

The holiday season is the perfect time to activate and experience the wonders of the heart center. Take a quick peak at your Christmas shopping list – do you spot a few people on there that you can do without shopping for? Yes, we all have those. Although we may fazz for a moment, the act of giving fulfills an emotional emptiness deep within our core.

Think to a time when you gave something to another person. Whether they needed your gift or not how did the act of giving make you feel, what emotions and feelings were brought to the surface? Many experienced joy, satisfaction and a sense of being of value. All these emotions come about when the heart center through the act of giving is activated. Hence: The Secret is in the Heart.

Giving is the secret to abundance and prosperity. As said by Saint Francis of Assisi, "It is in giving that we receive". When the heart blooms it radiates beams of absolute love, mercy, compassion, etc., towards every person and every being without exceptions. Equally, you will receive what you gave multiplied.

I personally invite you to try the following exercise every time you give:

- Slowly inhale and exhale for about 5-seconds.
- Gently place your left hand over your heart center.
- As you give to family, friends or charity be aware of your heart center.
- Observe and be aware of the emotions evoked by the action of giving.
- Silently make a wish. Added bonus: Making a wish points the energy towards what your heart desires the most. Remember, it is in giving that we receive.
- Silently give thanks for the opportunity to help and empower others for they unknowingly have empowered you through the energetic act of heart activation and karmic entitlement.

Have a question regarding this article or maybe you'd like to suggest a topic? Write to me at: m_arrieta@yahoo.com. Next article we will talk about Creating a Vision Board for 2017.

Marcela A. Arrieta is an alternative modality practitioner with over five years of experience in this field. She is also a successful entrepreneur who resides in Downey.

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Tupac, Pearl Jam, Journey among Hall of Fame inductees

CLEVELAND – The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame announced its 2017 inductees this week, a class that includes performers across a wide gauntlet of musical genres.

Nominated and voted on by over 900 musicians, journalists and critics, these artists and bands have made their permanent mark on music and continue to influence up-and-coming performers today.

Inductees include Tupac Shakur, Pearl Jam, Journey, Yes, Nile Rodgers, Joan Baez, and the Electric Light Orchestra.

Below are brief bios on each of the inductees, as provided by the Hall of Fame:

Electric Light Orchestra: Electric Light Orchestra, or more popularly known as ELO, were formed in Birmingham England in 1970 when Jeff Lynne and Roy Wood, members of The Move, had the vision to start a new project that would create modern rock and pop songs with classical overtones.

Joined by fellow Move member Bev Bevan, their mission was clear – to pick up where the Beatles left off and carry the torch. And they did just that. Their first single “10538 Overture,” released in 1972, is an unabashed homage to the Beatles, a heavily orchestrated psychedelic gem that sounded like their musical answer to “I Am The Walrus.”

Roy Wood left ELO later that year, leaving Lynne as the band’s sole creative force, and he took them to both creative and commercial heights. John Lennon once famously referred to the band as “sons of the Beatles,” but more than 40 years later, it is clear that ELO have carved out their own unique place in rock history.

Joan Baez: If you’ve seen Joan Baez live you’ll know the simmering charismatic presence that draws you into her performance.

It’s a powerful force that saw her cross over from her folk roots into

the mainstream, achieving gold albums in the 70’s and also provided a platform for her lifetime’s work, championing civil rights and human rights, highlighting the downtrodden, standing up against discrimination and reminding us it’s not always only rock ‘n roll.

Gifted with a natural singing voice and influenced by an early appreciation of opera, her career really took off following a performance at Newport Folk Festival in 1959, her first self-titled album coming out the following year. In these early days Baez was at the core of the American roots music revival where she championed a barely known at the time Bob Dylan and paved the way for other artists like Joni Mitchell and Emmylou Harris. Although a talented songwriter herself, it’s Joan Baez’s interpretation of other writer’s work that really stands out. At the age of 13 she was taken to see Pete Seeger whose performance inspired her to start learning some of his repertoire and perform publicly. It’s Baez’s version of ‘We Shall Overcome’ that became prominent during the Civil Rights Movement in the 60’s; she marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and performed the song at rallies.

In a career spanning over 55 years and over 30 albums, Joan Baez is still touring and still mesmerizing audiences all over the world. Her social activism has provoked and inspired, encouraging many other performers who followed to stand up for their beliefs.

Journey: Call it what you will – Arena Rock, Stadium Rock, Concert Rock – the music of Journey defined the big rock and roll sound of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Formed in San Francisco in 1973, the group was initially a combination of ex-Santana members Neal Schon and Gregg Rolie, and ex- Frumious Bandersnatch members. The band was steeped in the psychedelic and jazz fusion sounds of San Francisco and pushed out into the territory of progressive and hard rock with songs like “Of A Lifetime” and “I’m Gonna Leave You.”

In 1977 they found Steve Perry – one of the all-time great rock voices – a singer who could perform ballads and scorchers with equal skill and passion. Between 1978 and 1981, they refined their sound, worked on their songwriting, and eventually released one of the biggest hit albums of the early 1980s, *Escape* (1981). Pulling from Queen’s melodic rock sound (by specifically working with Queen producer Roy Thomas Baker), the band was soon performing in sold out stadiums around the world. Their biggest hit, “Don’t Stop Believin’” is a song that has gone beyond its own place and time and has become a cultural anthem.

Nile Rodgers: Nile Rodgers is one of those rare musical talents that can do almost anything.

He began his journey as a session musician in his hometown, New York City – playing with the Sesame Street traveling band, and then as a house band member at the Apollo. In 1977 Rodgers formed the funk/disco/soul band CHIC along with bass player Bernard Edwards. Their signature sound pushed hits including “Le Freak” and “Good Times” to the top of the charts and fueled the dance floor at clubs like the infamous Studio 54.

Starting in 1979, Rodgers and Edwards tried their hand at production and scored a massive success right out of the gate with Sister Sledge’s “We are Family.” In the 1980s Rodgers became one of the most sought after producers, helping to create albums that redefined an artist’s career, including Diana Ross, Diana, David Bowie, Let’s Dance, INXS, Original Sin, Madonna, Like a Virgin, Duran Duran, Notorious, The B-52s, Cosmic Thing, and the Vaughn Brothers, Family Style.

In the process of producing hit albums, Rodgers developed his own dance-rock signature sound that was imitated (if never duplicated) by numerous artists in a range of music styles. The 80s and 90s also saw him arranging film scores, releasing solo albums, and even reforming a version of CHIC.

Pearl Jam: When they released their debut album, *Ten*, in August, 1991, Pearl Jam were a band of young unknowns to anyone not from Seattle, Washington.

At home, Pearl Jam were practically a supergroup – founded in 1990 at a crossroads of classic rock, Seventies heavy metal and hardcore punk, just

as that city’s underground scene was about to go worldwide.

Bassist Jeff Ament and guitarist Stone Gossard played in the proto-grunge bands Green River and Mother Love Bone; Mike McCready was a highly regarded lead guitarist steeped in Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Matt Cameron of Seattle elders Soundgarden played drums on Pearl Jam’s early demos, finally joining in 1998 after a parade of drummers including Dave Krusen. Singer Eddie Vedder was an out-of-town wild card, a San Diego emigrant whose baritone howl, aggressively emotional lyrics and jubilantly unhinged stage presence quickly made him a universal symbol of the personal trials and cleansing rage at the heart of Nineties alternative rock.

Propelled by the hits “Alive” and “Jeremy” (about a high school student’s suicide), *Ten* sold over 13 million copies in America, launching a singular career of enduring commercial success (ten Top Five studio albums, half of them Number Ones) and staunch idealism.

Tupac Shakur: Beyond his popularity, Tupac Shakur is one of the most complex figures to emerge from hip-hop – really, to emerge from any art form.

Tupac was born into struggle—his mother, Afeni, was a leader in the Black Panther movement—but grew up to become not just a multi-platinum rapper, but a movie star. He managed to become both the “realest” artist, in a genre obsessed with authenticity, and larger than life. His songs preached activism and nihilism, expressed rage and love, raised questions without answers. He was a lightning rod, a screen onto which millions of people continue to project their feelings about rap, about race, and about the young black man in America today.

Tupac’s first solo album, *2Pacalypse Now*, instantly generated both acclaim and controversy. Though the single “Brenda’s Got A Baby” demonstrated his empathy and conscience, the album’s unsparing examinations of street violence and police harassment led to a public condemnation by Vice President Dan Quayle.

This tension would continue to play out over the next five years, as Tupac’s life grew increasingly tumultuous and his popularity escalated. “Keep Ya Head Up” and “Dear Mama” were heart-tugging, feminist anthems; elsewhere, he could be brutally misogynist and violent – a side of his work which escalated when he became part of Suge Knight’s Death Row empire.

But even as his rap sheet grew, his records kept getting better, culminating in 1996’s *All Eyez On Me*, which spawned five singles, including two Number One hits, “California Love” and “How Do U Want It.” Meanwhile, his performances in *Juice*, *Poetic Justice*, *Above The Rim*, and other movies revealed a powerful screen presence.

In a recording career tragically cut short after just five years, Tupac Shakur sold over 75 million records worldwide, with *All Eyez On Me* and his *Greatest Hits* collection both surpassing the ten million sales mark. Since his murder in 1996 at the age of 25, Tupac’s legend and impact have continued to expand across the globe. He has become an international symbol of resistance and outlaw spirit, an irresistible contradiction, a definitive rap anti-hero.

Yes: Yes is the most enduring, ambitious and virtuosic progressive band in rock history.

By fusing the cinematic soundscapes of King Crimson with the hard rock edge of The Who and the soaring harmonies and melodies of Simon and Garfunkel, they took progressive rock from a small audience of aficionados to radio airwaves and football stadiums all over America.

Hits like “Roundabout” and “I’ve Seen All Good People” appealed to rock fans who did not even think they liked prog rock, while album-side length epics like “Close To The Edge” and “The Gates Of Delirium” represent the genre at its absolute finest. Steve Howe remains one of the most underrated guitarists in rock history, while keyboardist Rick Wakeman, bassist Chris Squire and drummers Bill Bruford and Alan White will always be regarded as musicians simply without peer. Frontman Jon Anderson is an alto tenor singer who still hits the highest of high notes 45 years after forming the group.

While many of their contemporaries wilted once punk hit, Yes managed to change with the times. With the addition of Trevor Rabin’s guitar virtuosity and songwriting talent, Yes reemerged in the 80s as an MTV-ready commercial force, landing massive hits on the charts like “Owner Of A Lonely Heart.”

While prog giants like Pink Floyd, Genesis and Emerson Lake & Palmer retired years ago, Yes continues to tour (albeit with some new members) at a pace that would leave bands half their age breathless.

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MOVIE REVIEW: Rogue One puts the 'war' in Star Wars



By Alex Dominguez
Contributor

Love it or hate it, it has been an eventful few years for fans of the Star Wars franchise.

Since Disney purchased Lucasfilm back in 2012, Luke, Leia and company have been joined by a myriad of new characters and source material, including books, comics, a television show currently airing its third season on Disney Channel, and, of course, a slew of new movies.

The newest movie to hit theaters, "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," released late last week to eagerly anticipating fans and skeptics alike.

While some may feel like Rogue One may be the next epic chapter (sub-chapter?) in the saga to be told cinematically, many others feel that this film could be just another shameless Disney money grab.

Both sides have a valid point.

The entire film takes place sometime between the events of the ongoing Star Wars Rebels TV show and the beginning of Episode IV. In laymen's terms, the entire movie takes place in the first two paragraphs of A New Hope's opening crawl.

This brings me to my first point: Rogue One may be in the Star Wars continuity, but it is not a Star Wars "Episode." And that's okay.

The film does a miraculously good job of holding the audience's attention and keeping suspense while functioning as a prequel to the original saga.

No surprises here folks; the events of Rogue one lead to the destruction of the Death Star.

Yet while the outcome of the film may be obvious, Rogue One's nonstop action keeps the viewer with a feeling of urgency and suspense.

This brings about one of the films other great qualities: Rogue One puts the "War" in Star Wars.

You won't find any Jedi or highflying light saber duels in Rogue One; those are more elegant elements for a more civilized movie.

What you will find in Rogue is fast paced, gritty, boots-on-ground and X-Wing-in-the-sky battles.

Rogue One easily provides my personal favorite battle sequence in the entire franchise.

However, while Rogue One does provide tons of great action and storytelling, it does fall flat in some aspects.

Rogue One's character development is more than lacking for most of the cast. With the exception of main character Jyn Erso and hilarious new droid K-2SO, I found it extremely hard to connect or care for any of Rogue One's characters.

Erso, played by Felicity Jones, is the only character to receive any real kind of backstory or motive.

Even her counterpart, Captain Cassian Andor played by Diego Luna, seemed like little more than cannon fodder with a "Rebels good, Empire bad," mindset; an attribute that was particularly painful during what I can only assume was supposed to be a heartfelt, mid-movie monologue for the character.

Rogue One also overdoes its fan service, with many Easter eggs and cameos that seem to be included for the sole purpose of a cheap pop at the movie theaters.

Even Darth Vader, who was revealed to be in the movie during one of the original teaser trailers, seems as if he was placed into the film more for his draw power and less for his relevancy to the action, and could easily be removed without affecting the story whatsoever.

That being said, some of the aforementioned nods to the previous material is welcomed, and does in fact enrich certain scenes.

Rogue One is a good movie. While this part of the saga could easily have been left to a few brief sentences on a scrolling space background, many fans (myself included) will be and are happy to see this part of the story being told.

Rogue One is a nice addition to the franchise, and is worth a theater viewing by diehard fanatics and casual fans alike.

DECEMBER 22 BIRTHDAYS

Meghan Trainor, pop singer behind "All About That Bass," turns 23



Diane Sawyer news anchor 71



Ted Cruz U.S. Senator 46



Jordin Sparks pop singer 27

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Shared Stories: A Box of Chocolates

Life presented Daniela Kanz with a special surprise one Christmas at the Downey Wonderbowl. Shared Stories is a weekly column featuring articles by participants in a writing class at the Norwalk Senior Center. Bonnie Mansell is the instructor for this free class offered through the Cerritos College Adult Education Program. Curated by Carol Kearns

By Daniela Kanz

I heard Forrest Gump, played by Tom Hanks in the 1994 movie, say, "Mama always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get."

Whenever Christmas rolls around, I always receive a box of chocolates. My daughters have continued the tradition their dad started. "Why do I get a box of chocolates every Christmas?" you ask.

Turn the calendar back to December 23, 1961. This New York transplant to California went with a friend to Wonderbowl in Downey.

We noticed several young fellows about our age, bowling. One of the fellows made me chuckle every time he went to throw the ball. As he began his stance and before he let go of the ball, he did a little movement similar to what is now known as twerking. I suppose he was way beyond his time.

After a few minutes of watching them, we wandered over to where people played pool. Then I noticed a table similar to pool but with more balls.

I remarked, "I wonder what they are playing," to my friend. It turned out that the person standing next to me was not my friend, but the fellow I had noticed earlier.

He responded, "They are playing snooker." I had recently seen the movie The Hustler with Paul Newman, so I was intrigued. The young man began to explain the difference between snooker and pool.

Then he said, "Would you like to get a cup of coffee?"

"But I don't even know you," I replied.

His response, "My name is Bruno, what's yours?"

"Ahhhh, Dani..."

"OK, now - let's get that cup of coffee." After my friend Bruno and I entered the dining area and sat at a booth, the other young men swarmed us, one of whom latched on to my friend.

Soon it was time to drive to Long Beach to get my friend home. Bruno insisted on coming along as fog had rolled in and he was concerned about this novice driver navigating the Long Beach Freeway in the fog.

After dropping my friend off, I dropped Bruno off and went to my apartment in Downey figuring I would never see this fellow again, though I did give him my phone number.

The next morning was Christmas Eve day. I woke up to a knock on my door. There stood Bruno.

"How did you find me?"

"I called and you gave me the address," he said. I must have done that in my sleep. Soon we were sitting at my kitchen table, drinking tea and visiting.

He asked what I had planned for the holiday. I told him I planned on going to midnight candlelight service at the Downey Presbyterian Church and that I had one ticket to see King of Kings in Hollywood.

He told me that his dad had a stroke and was at Rancho Los Amigos in Downey. Would I accompany Bruno on a visit to his dad? I had nothing better to do and truth be told, I liked him. His dad was extremely happy to see his son and I enjoyed the dad's German accent. It made me feel nostalgic for my parents.

After our visit, Bruno suggested we take a drive and look at the lights around town, since it had become dark. The drive was enchanting, as I never experienced this growing up in New York City.

After the drive, Bruno wanted me to come to his home to meet his mom. It was only fair, since I already met his dad.

After visiting awhile, it was time to open gifts. I enjoyed watching the festivities when all of a sudden Bruno handed me a wrapped box. I was stunned. We just met and spent the entire day together. How did he have something for me?

I opened the box and saw it was See's Candy. Later I learned that he had originally given it to his mom and asked if she minded if he gave it to me.

He had another worry. What if the present had a note attached that said - MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM NORRIS THERMADOR - his place of employment. He was thankful there was no such note.

Since I had nothing for him, I went in my wallet and offered him the movie ticket. He said he would not go unless I went with him. He called and found out he could obtain another ticket. He also accompanied me to the candle light service.

This man captured my heart and by February 10th we were married.



Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center hosted its annual Adopt-A-Family celebration on Dec. 7. This year, Bank of America provided gifts for 150 people from 33 families.

Approximately 55 Bank of America associates volunteered to attend the festive celebration to serve dinner to the families and play Santa's helpers.

POETRY MATTERS

ALL THE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

**What shall my true love
Have from me
To please his Christmas
Wealthily?
The partridge has flown
From our pear tree.**

**Flown with our summers,
Are the swans, the geese.
Milkmaids and drummers
Would leave him little peace.
I've no gold ring
And no turtle dove.
So what can I bring
To my true love?**

**A coat for the drizzle,
Chosen at the store;
A saw and a chisel
For mending the door;
A pair of red slippers
To slip on his feet;
Three striped neckties;
Something sweet.**

**He shall have all
I can best afford -
No pipers, piping,
No leaping Lord,
But a fine fat hen
For his Christmas board;
Two pretty daughters
(Versed in the role)
To be worn like pinks
In his buttonhole;
And the tree of my heart
With its calling linnet,
My evergreen heart
And the bright bird in it.**

-- Phyllis McGinley

The twelve days of Christmas in the song are the 12 days between the birth of Christ (December 25) and the coming of the Magi (Epiphany, January 6). McGinley brings the joys of the season home with unexpected rhymes that are the poet's gift to the reader.

Poetry Matters is curated by Lorine Parks

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Symphony Concert
Car Show

Former Downey High teacher sued for sexual relationship with student

The worst home-buying advice people actually believe

If you're looking to buy a house, you're bound to have well-meaning friends and family pull you aside and say, "Let me give you some advice." After all, they've been there, done that. Or they've watched an ungodly amount of "House Hunters."

We know they're trying to be helpful, but just because people have an opinion doesn't mean they're informed. And when it comes to buying a house, that seemingly friendly direction can send you down the wrong path.

So to keep you from jumping into the market armed with half-baked "wisdom," we've gathered the worst home-buying advice people have heard and explain why these maxims are myth rather than gospel.

'Hold off, home prices are going down'

Why you might hear this: The predictions have been going on for years: The housing bubble is going to burst again; income is stagnant; the zombie apocalypse will free up stock.

Why it's bad advice: Sadly, we have yet to find a Magic 8 Ball that's spot-on when it comes to predicting the future. So if you want or need to buy a home, the time isn't someday—it's now. And "with a lack of inventory and the busiest time of the year approaching, home prices aren't going down anytime soon," says California Realtor Tracey Hampson.

'You don't need to use a real estate agent'

Why you might hear this: See a home you like, then make an offer—how hard can it be? Cut a buyer's agent out of the picture entirely and you'll do just fine. Plus, with no agent to collect a commission, you'll be able to negotiate a better deal with the seller. Right?

Why it's bad advice: In a market where houses are moving so fast it'd give you whiplash, a real estate agent is indispensable. Not only will your agent know about properties long before you do, he or she can

also guide you through mountains of paperwork, pointing out potential problems that could cost you big-time down the road.

"Also, though you may consider yourself a great negotiator, an agent's knowledge and experience will help you get the house you want at the best price," says Atlanta-based Realtor Bill Golden of Re/Max Metro Atlanta Cityside.

'Just use the listing agent to represent you'

Why you might hear this: While listing agents work for the seller, they might offer to help you, too. What's wrong with that? It certainly seems to cut down on the number of cooks in the kitchen, and maybe it'll give you an edge in a competitive bidding situation.

Why it's bad advice: You need someone in your own corner with a water bottle, cool towel, and an eye on getting you the best deal.

Put simply, "the seller's agent represents the seller," says Evelina K. Vatkova, associate partner at Partners Trust in Beverly Hills, CA. It's akin to going to court with just one lawyer—one who's working both sides of a case. You want someone who has your interests in mind, first and last.

'Make a lowball offer and negotiate up from there'

Why you might hear this: Someone read Donald Trump's "The Art of the Deal" and thinks everything is a negotiation.

Why it's bad advice: Making a major lowball offer can very often start negotiations off on the wrong foot with the seller. Worse, "you end up paying more in the end than you would [have] had you been more reasonable to start with," says Golden. Serious buyers and sellers know what homes are worth. Which leads to our next piece of bad advice...

'Never pay full price'

Why you might hear this: Because only losers pay full price, right?

(See: "The Art of the Deal.")

Why it's bad advice: There's no such thing as absolutes in real estate.

"If a home is overpriced, you don't want to pay full price," says Golden. "However, if it seems that the house is well worth the money after carefully studying the comps your Realtor provides, paying full price may be the only way to get it, especially in a seller's market."

'Remove contingencies to make your offer stronger'

Why you might hear this: A house has tons of bidders, and you want to be the most attractive to the seller.

Why it's bad advice: In a competitive market, it's tempting to feel pressure to cast off contingencies—you know, those safeguards where you agree to buy the home only if certain requirements (e.g., passing a home inspection or title clearance) are met. Of course sellers dislike contingencies, because they're designed to protect you against utter catastrophe—say, your buying a home riddled with toxic mold or liens that will cost you thousands of dollars.

"Never remove contingencies unless you are 100% positive the property is the right home for you," says Erfan Haj, an associate partner at Partners Trust.

'Don't bother hiring a home inspector'

Why you might hear this: You'll spend a lot of money on an inspector to point out a leaky faucet. Besides, the home looks fine! Um, right?

Why it's bad advice: Oh boy. That property that looks just perfect at an open house could be rife with issues only a pro will uncover. And saving those few bucks from skimping on an inspector could cost you loads down the line. And Los Angeles stager Michelle Minch of Moving Mountains Design reminds us not to skip inspection even with a home warranty from the seller.

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