Circling the Station Wagon and SUVs

ROUNDABOUT PROPOSED AT UH GATEWAY

The North Park Community Plan may bring something to University Heights (UH) that has never been seen here before—a roundabout, such as the one depicted in an artist’s rendering above, at the gateway to the community and the “village” commercial district.

Anyone who has lived in UH or its surrounding communities has had to deal with the odd, unexpected, difficult, confusing, and at times downright dangerous intersection of Park Blvd., El Cajon Blvd., and Normal Street. The Mobility Element of the updated community plan offers a possible solution, the building of a modern roundabout at this very intersection. The plan also calls for consideration of roundabout at this very intersection.

Essentially, a roundabout is a “type of circular intersection or junction in which the traffic flows continuously in one direction around a central island,” according to Wikipedia.

Traditionally, roundabouts have had lights to gauge the flow of traffic into the circular intersection. However, what is proposed for Park, El Cajon and Normal in UH is a “modern” roundabout that “requires entering traffic to give way to traffic already in the circle.”

Roundabouts are said to have many advantages, including greater safety, reduced accidents and pollution, increased traffic flow, and improved aesthetics.

The next step is to have it become an actual CIP project and find funding to design and construct it. Here’s the IFS link; go to page 11 for the info: https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/fy_2017_north_park_ifs_-10-12-2016_draft.pdf.

University Heights Community Association (UHCA) for sponsoring a meeting in October 2015 where over 100 people voiced their opinions, my fellow members of the Uptown Planners, and many others in the community.

More information will be coming out on uhs2030.wordpress.com.—Bill Ellig

Editor’s Note: On October 25, UHCA member Bill Smith addressed the City Council on the subject of One Planning Group. We present an abbreviated version of his remarks:

The City Council of San Diego is here today to review the North Park Community Plan Update, which includes as an attachment a Response to Public Comments by the Planning Department. In its response to the University Heights Community Association’s request for One Planning Group, planning staff maintains that there is “no compelling land use planning rationale for changing the boundary.” Staff stated that boundaries are generally determined by (Continued on page 9)
president’s corner by Carol Neidenberg

What a momentous time in American history—one of the largest turnouts in a presidential election and a year that will never be again!

With the elections over, our focus is once again diverted to local issues. You’ve told us previously that the issues that concern you most are affordable housing, a growing homeless population, lack of street lighting, and speeding motorists.

During my term of office, I pledge to work beside you to make a difference.

Now pay your dues or donate online at www.uhsd.org.

University Heights Map: Boundaries and Zone Watch

The bold street names on this map define the boundaries of the community of University Heights. Every block and apartment/condo should have an established Neighborhood Watch.

A zone is a neighborhood within University Heights as defined by the six zones on this map.

The blocks within each zone are linked together via a Zone Watch Coordinator who manages an email list of participants wishing to receive crime watch information. For questions or for more info, contact either your zone’s coordinator or Nan McGraw.

The University Heights Community Association is largely dependent upon the volunteer efforts of area residents.

Volunteer Your Time on a UHCA Committee!

- Beautification & Planning: Keep UH beautiful.
- Blockwalker: Help deliver newsletters to UH residences and businesses.
- Marketing & Merchandising: Promote UHCA via marketing/advertising, visual arts, photography, and product merchandising.
- Membership: Help exceed goals for 2016 membership and meeting attendance.
- Neighborhood/Zone Watch: Join your neighbors to keep UH safe.
- UHCA News: Write articles, take photos, or sell ads; these are just a few of the many ways to contribute your talent, creativity, and energy to our paper.
- Program & Events: Plan and oversee various events and general meetings.

www.uhsd.org

Join UHCA today and be part of the team! The success of the University Heights Community Association is dependent on the volunteer efforts of area residents.

Membership Form

Now pay your dues or donate online at www.uhsd.org.

Donor

$ _____________ Donation for Keeping up the Good Work (Donate as a member or non-member)

Business Name

Zip

Email

Reference

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$ _____________ Donation for Keeping up the Good Work (Donate as a member or non-member)

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DECEMBER MEETING

PASTRIES, PLUMES, AND PETS

MEET YOUR NEW COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS WARD
DESSERT POT LUCK

J


The Giving Tree was created to help needy children and families of our local Alice Birney Elementary School during the holiday season.

The Giving Tree is filled with ornaments priced from $5 to $25 from stores, such as Target, Toys R Us, Ralphs, and Trader Joe’s that allow a family to buy gifts or necessities for the holidays. It is not too late to contribute. Bring a gift card to the December meeting or contact Nan McGraw (nmcsan@aol.com) to arrange your gift to Birney.

CAROLING IN THE HEIGHTS

For many years UHCA has sponsored Caroling in the Heights and once again UHCA is presenting this festive outreach to you. Please join your neighbors for an evening of fun entertainment, beverages, and cookies. On the evening of December 11, we will be at the following locations: 5:00 p.m. Vermont St. Bridge, 5:45 p.m. Howard and Georgia Streets, 6:30 p.m. Mystic Mocha, 7:15 p.m. The Point (Golden Gate and Rhode Island).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, VERMONT STREET BRIDGE

December 10th marks the 22nd Birthday of the Bridge 2016 is the 100th Anniversary of the former Wooden Trestle Bridge

The first bridge to connect Hillcrest to University Heights was built in 1916 following the Panama-California Exposition. It was meant to shorten the walk between the two neighborhoods and provide access to the streetcar lines running along University Avenue and Park Boulevard. In 1978 the old bridge was deemed unsafe and a year later it was demolished with the promise it would be rebuilt. It took 15 years and tireless lobbying by the University Heights Community Association (UHCA) to give birth to the new, modern, steel bridge. On December 10, 1994, we celebrated its grand opening. Each holiday season, UHCA volunteers decorate and light the bridge with more than 5,000 lights. Thank you to the UHCA members who worked hard to make this vital link to Uptown (The Hub) possible, to Tommy Cope who was instrumental in having the bridge repainted recently, and to all the volunteers who clean and decorate the bridge every year.

SOCKS FOR VETS

We will be collecting new socks for homeless veterans at our December meeting and donating them to the Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSD). Let’s help our homeless veterans by supporting another successful University Heights (UH) sock collection. Bring new socks to the December holiday meeting. After the meeting, the Socks for Vets box will be moved to the UH Branch Library until December 16th when we will take them to Veterans Village.

THE ANNUAL LIGHTS IN THE HEIGHTS CONTEST

Did you know that the tradition of holiday lights on homes traces back to candles, melted to Christmas tree branches in 18th century Germany? Be a part of this time-honored tradition by participating in the University Heights Community Association’s (UHCA) annual Lights in the Heights Contest.

Each holiday season, the UHCA recognizes and award residents and businesses for the hard work and creativity of decorating their properties, spreading holiday cheer and fostering a sense of camaraderie within our fine community. For those who love to decorate their homes/businesses for the holidays, we welcome your participation in this annual University Heights tradition. Just make sure your lights are on during the final judging on December 19, 2016.

The decorations will be judged on their beauty and originality, not necessarily on the cost invested or on the amount of decorations you have. This is a wonderful family activity, so let’s get out there and deck those halls! —Cheryl Ann Cooke

SOCKS FOR VETS

NEW SOCKS FOR MEN & WOMEN

BRING TO DEC 1 UHCA MEETING OR UH LIBRARY UNTIL DECEMBER 16

www.uhsd.org
The Barber of Seville

Asking George Figaro, owner of the Barber of Seville barbershop on Park Blvd in University Heights (UH), to talk about himself is like asking an opera singer to sing out of tune. He’ll do it, maybe, but he won’t like it. Although he loves his shop and says “I like to spoil these people, and to be the best barber I can be,” George would much rather talk about his wife and his family.

Small and cozy, the shop is filled with family photos, opera posters, and photos of George and his wife Nunzia in costume as extras at the opera. In San Diego since high school, George started cutting hair at 17, when he attended a local barber college. He was an apprentice for two years, and then a journeyman barber. He has been the owner and operator of his UH shop for 37 years, and prior to that he was a barber in Ocean Beach for 14 years.

The name of his shop reflects his love for opera, and he and his wife of 45 years are both involved in local opera—George as an extra, and Nunzia as an extra and as a seamstress for the opera and for several area theaters. Together they have three children, two sons and a daughter. They met in Italy when George went to visit his grandmothers, and his eyes light up when he talks about his wife, their daughter and two sons, and his two-year-old grandson.

George is also a member of The Brothers of the Little Oratory, an all-male Catholic choir that performs oral prayers in Gregorian chant and appears at many churches in the San Diego area. George even traveled to England for his “collar as an oratorio” from the Brompton Oratory in London.

A warm, open, and friendly person with an easy smile, George “feels grateful that (his clients) patronize me. I want anyone who comes in to feel welcomed and accepted and appreciated.” Judging from the number of clients he has, I think they do!
ADVENTURES IN URBAN FORESTRY — STREET TREE MAPPING PROJECT

**HELP CREATE A MAP OF FUTURE STREET TREES!**

The value of street trees is immense and we are looking for your input and help in planting more trees in our neighborhood. Research shows that street trees in an urban setting can provide a variety of benefits to the human population. Traditionally, we think of trees as providing shade and giving us oxygen; however, they do much more than that!

In addition to decreasing pollution, street trees also increase property values, reduce noise and UV levels, and assist in reducing the speed of traffic. Increasing street trees in an urban setting can even offset the initial water usage. Once planted and established, street trees will provide shade to our sidewalks and houses, and will reduce the amount of water needed for other landscaping as well as energy bills, and create cooler sidewalks for pets and families to walk on.

Our neighborhood needs to work together to attain this goal, by assisting with mapping proper places for trees to be planted. In order for trees to survive, they require at least a 2-foot-wide pathway area, or a 3 ft x 3 ft tree cut out. Participatory mapping allows us to create a map that reflects the greatest need determined by the community.

If you would like to help map your block, please contact the Street Tree Mapping Project via Michelle Fenwick at f wenwick@miamioh.edu. A map will be sent to you where you can highlight and color where in University Heights you’d like to see more street trees.

Once we identify where street trees are most desired, we will submit our maps to City of San Diego Urban Forestry Department to have trees planted free of charge. City officials will work with businesses and homeowners at that time to determine what type of trees will be planted in your pathway or tree cutout, and crews will install them.

All that is required is a commitment to water the tree until it is established, approximately one to three years. This project is expected to help increase property values, improve the environment, encourage people to walk more, and increase the sense of community that is already strong in University Heights.

Thank you for participating and bringing more greenery to our urban core.

—Michelle Fenwick

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**AIRBNB AND UHCA**

Airbnb and the University Heights Community Association (UHCA) hosted a merchant walk along Park Blvd. in University Heights on October 27th, and it provided a great opportunity for Airbnb hosts to get to know each other and enjoy the variety of wonderful businesses our community has to offer.

Hosts joined us from many areas, UH to downtown to Webster, to enjoy delicious food and drink; and our neighborhood businesses were so hospitable in opening their doors to the group. In addition to boosting their guidebooks for guests, Airbnb hosts were able to rally around the City Council’s November 1st meeting during which a ban on vacation rentals was considered. At that meeting, the City Council voted to reject the ban and in the future address further concerns and regulations. Robust discussion took place, and community was built between hosts.

Thanks to New Vision Christian Fellowship for helping to provide parking, and many thanks to the Park Blvd. businesses who welcomed groups: Madison, Red House Piazza, Muzita Bistro, Twiggs, and Park & Rec. A special shout out to Original Skin & Body Care, Borrelli Design, and Diversionary Theatre for their willingness to participate. —Christine Cole

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**JAN 2017**

**SUNDAY**

1. Hillcrest Farmers Market
   Lincoln & Cleveland 9 am-2 pm

2. Holiday

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**MONDAY**

3. Holiday

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**TUESDAY**

4. Hillcrest Farmers Market
   Lincoln & Cleveland 9 am-2 pm

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**WEDNESDAY**

5. UH Rec Council Meeting
   NO UHCA MEETING

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**THURSDAY**

6. Friends of the Library
   Friends of the Library Book Sale
   Lincol & Cleveland 8:30 pm, UH Library

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**FRIDAY**

7. Friends of the Library
   Friends of the Library Book Sale
   Lincol & Cleveland 3 pm, UH Library

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**SATURDAY**

8. Hillcrest Farmers Market
   Lincoln & Cleveland 9 am-2 pm

9. Friends of the Library
   Friends of the Library Book Sale
   Lincol & Cleveland 4 pm, UH Library

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**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next University Heights Community Association (UHCA) meeting will be February 2, 2017. We will feature the future plans for Normal Street, as well as nearby housing construction projects. Please join us for this informative presentation and special Valentines Day too!
Thank you to the businesses and volunteers who support the Lions Club’s efforts to continue displaying the flags on Park Boulevard!

The Hillcrest Mission Valley Lions Club has provided support services for the blind and other services since 1933. They are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all proceeds for the Flag Service Program go directly to help the blind and the visually and hearing impaired.

Help us to make sure flags are flying on Presidents’ Day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Patriots’ Day (September 11th), and Veterans Day. The University Heights Community Association (UHCA) is appealing to you and the businesses on Park Boulevard to provide the funding to sponsor these flags. The Lions Club charges $50 per flag to cover the entire year of 8 holidays. We are still short on the money to supply the 33 flags needed on Park.

If you would like to help UH keep the flags flying, please make a check out to the Hillcrest Mission Valley Lions Club and mail to UHCA at PO Box 33032, San Diego, 92163. Thank you for your support.

The 50th Anniversary celebration of the University Heights library building at Park Blvd. and Howard Ave was a huge success! While we didn’t get any golden anniversary gifts, we did get a new paint job and landscaping for the event, and we did have more than 75 attendees who packed the library for an interesting and informative lecture on Modern architecture in San Diego, presented by Keith York of Modern San Diego (www.modernsandiego.com). Mr. York made an interesting and compelling argument that San Diego’s own Irving Gill (1870-1938) is an unsung and unheralded hero and the father of Modern architecture in Southern California.

The highlight of the morning was York’s one-on-one conversation with Hal Sadler, a noted San Diego Modern architect whose work inspired the design of the University Heights library building, the subject of our celebration. Among other things, York and Sadler discussed the role of architecture and the architect in helping to build communities such as UH, as well as Mr. Sadler’s work, which includes the old Serra Mesa Public Library, the Sprouts Market next door to our library on Park, and the Boulevard Fitness building on El Cajon (originally an Abbey Rents storefront). The morning began with brief congratulatory remarks from Todd Gloria, outgoing Third District Councilmember; Misty Jones, San Diego Public Library Director; Kim Schmidt, UH branch manager; and Philip Gill, president of the UH Friends. We were pleased to accept a special Certificate of Recognition from Speaker Emeritus Assemblywoman Toni Atkins, who recently won election to the California State Senate.

A special thank you to Adriana Martinez, field representative in Todd Gloria’s office, who was instrumental in obtaining the new exterior paint job for the UH library. The building doesn’t look 50 years old at all, maybe 40, even 39!

Thank you to all the good Friends and volunteers without whose devotion and work the event would never have happened—Nan McGraw, Isabel Schecter, Phyllis Kessel, Anne Schwartz, Carol Nedenberg, Paul Farris, and Maureen Markey, as well as the entire UH library staff. If I have forgotten anyone, please forgive me.

Following the lecture and talk, the Friends of the University Heights Library hosted a reception and a book sale that raised money for the ongoing restoration and renovation of the UH library. Limited-edition commemorative tote bags, designed especially for the event and featuring a distinctive design by our very own Paul Farris, were available.

For anyone who wants to learn more about Irving Gill, he and his work are the subject of a series of concurrent museum exhibits and other events throughout San Diego County that will run through March, and another exhibit at the Museum of Art and Design at UC Santa Barbara (museum.ucsb.edu). For more information, visit the website of the Irving Gill Foundation at irvinggill.org. —Philip Gill, President, Friends of the University Heights Library
Happy Holidays from Birney Elementary!

We look forward to our end-of-term celebrations and awards as well as our Winter Break from December 19th through January 16th, but we have a few opportunities we’d like to welcome the University Heights community to participate in over the season.

**Birney Buzz**

On Thursday, December 1st, Birney will be the beneficiary of a Family Dinner Night at Boudin in Fashion Valley Mall from 4pm-9pm. Download a flyer from our birneyspta.com website and show it at Boudin to give 30 percent of your purchase price back to Birney for both dine-in and take-out orders. Come meet Birney families and get to know our school community while giving back and enjoying great food.

The Friends of Alice Birney Elementary’s Big Give online fundraising event will be held on Thursday, December 15th, from 7am-7pm. Our goal is to raise $23,000 to fund Spanish, Art, and Garden programs. Show your holiday spirit by supporting your neighborhood school with one last tax-deductible contribution before the end of the year. We also offer many great sponsorship opportunities for local businesses. To learn more about what our International Baccalaureate (IB) students are up to, how close we are to meeting our fundraising goals, and how you can sponsor your world-class neighborhood school, check out www.friendsofalicebirney.org.

When students return to school in January, we’ll celebrate Great Kindness Week for two solid weeks, since this five-year Birney tradition has simply gotten too big for only one week! Students, teachers, and staff will be concentrating on performing acts of kindness, which highlights our International Baccalaureate learner profile attributes, not the least of which is being caring.

—By Kim Schultz

The cost is $30 per student, so only about 20 percent of Roosevelt’s 6th graders will be able to take the trip over Spring Break. If you’d like to help make camping a reality for students in financial need, please visit https://roosevelt-6th-grade-camp.weebly.com/donate. Your tax-deductible donation to the Roosevelt PTSA will help provide scholarships to students who might not otherwise have this life-changing opportunity. Contact RooseveltPTSA1@gmail.com for more information.

**In Case You Missed It**

The November meeting opened with the Crime Watch report that included the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team, more commonly known by its acronym, PERT. PERT is a law enforcement-based mental health crisis intervention program that pairs a licensed mental health professional with a law enforcement officer. Together, they provide compassionate crisis intervention to persons living with mental illness who come into contact with law enforcement. The goal is to safely and effectively de-escalate crisis situations, provide appropriate referrals and, after the least restrictive level of care, avoiding unnecessary hospitalization and incarceration. The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) often works hand-in-hand with PERT when dealing with our homeless population.

Following that report, University Heights (UH) resident Bill Ellig, a board member of Uptown Planners, announced that the November 14th meeting of the San Diego City Council will deal with the Uptown Community Plan Update. He urged support of Uptown Planners’ recommendation for the Density Redistribution Alternative.

The evening’s program was an informative panel discussion, Understanding Issues Affecting Veterans, moderated by Bill Yrk, a longtime University Heights (UH) resident and executive vice president of 2-1-1. The panel consisted of Randee McLain, Hanan Scrapper, Kym Grey, and Walt Myhre.

Randee McLain is the Courage to Call program manager, Mental Health Systems, Inc., and the 2013-14 San Diego Veteran of the Year. Through her expertise Ms. McLain provided attendees with an overall picture of the top needs our veterans face in their everyday lives, such as food assistance, financial and legal support, and education services, and the ways, working together through a coordinated network of systems, partners, and supporters, we can help meet their needs.

Hanan Scrapper is the program director, Supportive Services for Veteran Families of Veterans Village of San Diego (VVSDF). She provided us with an overview of the homeless issues that our veterans and their families face and the various programs that are provided through VVSDF to help veterans secure permanent housing to build and sustain healthy lives.

Kym Grey is the program manager, Transition and Care Management of Veterans Administration (VA) San Diego Healthcare System. Ms. Grey gave a briefing on the Transition and Care Management program along with the core services of the VA and various initiatives and efforts underway between the VA and community agencies, nonprofits, and service-based organizations.

Walt Myhre is the director of strategic partnerships of PsychArmor Institute. He discussed the importance of understanding the veterans and military culture and community, and how training for those that serve veterans is critical to the collective success of the veterans. PsychArmor Institute (www.psychArmor.org) is a national nonprofit that provides free online education and support to all Americans who work with, live with, or care for service members, veterans, and their families.

**In Case You Missed It**

The city has completed the first Community Plan Update. The report includes the VA and various initiatives and efforts aimed at nourishing an appreciation of nature, creating a safe, educational, and fun environment. The city will work with agencies, nonprofits, and service-based organizations to ensure that safe, educational, and fun environment.

**Sono Fest and Chili Cook Off December 4th to Support Mckinley Elementary**

The 7th Annual SoNo Fest and Chili Cook-Off is December 4th from 11 AM to 5 PM. This year promises to be even bigger and better with a fierce chef competition for best chili, a re-imagined SoNo Kids Fun Fest, hand-selected local artisan vendors, a craft beer garden, and live music on two stages! $20 gets you a handmade ceramic bowl and five 2 oz. restaurant chili tastes. Or bring your own bowl and buy chili tastes for $15. Local brewers will be represented in the beer garden with some of the country’s best craft beer. Shop handmade goods from more than 30 local vendors. Kids can also have fun with bounce houses, carnival games, face-painting, hair-dos, ping pong, obstacle course, and more. And, there will be the perfect chili-eating, beer-drinking soundtrack—enjoy live music on two stages sponsored by Bar Tar and the Cashba. For more info, go to sonofestchilicookoff.com/details/

Roosevelt wishes you joyous holidays and a happy and healthy New Year!!
Between the Covers:

What’s Happening at the University Heights Library

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS LIBRARY

As you have probably noticed, the library exterior was recently repainted to coincide with the building’s 50th anniversary celebration. That is probably the most obvious change, but certainly not the only improvement made during the past two years. In addition to the new coat of paint the library has enjoyed: 1) new furniture in the public areas; 2) new carpeting and tile flooring throughout the first floor; 3) a new service desk; 4) a new window wall at the front of the building; 5) new, brighter, energy efficient lighting both inside and outside the building; and 6) a beautiful succulent garden in front of the library.

But that’s not all. If all goes as planned, by June 2017, the library will also have: 1) additional electrical outlets available to patrons wishing to plug in their phones and other personal electronic devices; 2) a new window wall in the back section of the library; and 3) a new, energy-efficient heating and air conditioning system.

Thanks to those who have made these improvements possible, including: The City of San Diego, former City Councilman Todd Gloria and his staff, The Friends of the University Heights Library, The University Heights Community Association Beautification Committee, and individual donors.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Please join us on Wednesday, December 14th, at 6:00 pm for our annual Holiday Open House. This year the party will feature a light refreshments and musical entertainment with The Bayou Brothers. Come mingle and jingle with your friends and neighbors.

MOVIE SCREENING – “STRAWBERRY AND CHOCOLATE”

In conjunction with this year’s One Book One San Diego book selection: Waiting for Snow in Havana by Carlos Eire, the library will be showing the Cuban LGBT film “Strawberry and Chocolate.” The film is in Spanish with English Subtitles and is rated PG.

THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY—WHO WE ARE

On Tuesday, January 17th, at 6:00 pm the University Heights Library will host a forum focusing on the issues faced by members of the transgender community. Join Connor Maddocks and colleagues from the San Diego LGBT Center for an informative discussion and a questions and answers session.

NEW CHILDREN’S WEEKLY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Our Youth Services Librarian will conduct Arts & Crafts for Kids on Saturdays at 10:30 am.

SENIOR MOBILE TECH LAB — SECOND FRIDAY EACH MONTH 2 – 4:30 PM

The Tech Lab is a service provided by the Consumer Center for Health Education & Advocacy. Thank you Tech Lab tutors for the great service you provide! WE LOVE THE LAB! If you are 60 years or older, join us for one-on-one tutoring in the use of your smartphone, tablet, laptop, electronic reader and so on. Tutors will be on hand with laptops for the public to use. Patrons are also encouraged to bring their own devices to the session. Learn how to send and receive email, surf the internet, use Facebook and other social networks, and more. The program is free.

PLEASE NOTE! DUE TO THE POPULARITY OF THIS PROGRAM, THOSE WISHING TO ATTEND THE CLASS MUST SIGN UP IN ADVANCE BY CALLING 619-471-2713. THIS IS THE NUMBER FOR THE AGENCY THAT PROVIDES THE TUTORS, NOT THE LIBRARY.

BECOME A FRIEND OF THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS LIBRARY

If you enjoy the services and programs provided by the University Heights Branch Library, you need to know that our programming depends on the generosity of donations from the community. One of the best ways you can help support the library is to join the Friends of the University Heights Library. For a minimum donation of $10.00 ($5.00 for students and seniors), you can sign up for an annual Friends membership. Just stop into the branch and ask a staff member for a membership envelope. Help our library to be fabulous and make new friends. Join the Friends of the University Heights Library.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOK SALES

Saturday, December 17 (8 am–3 pm) and Sunday, December 18 (noon–4 pm)

Find great bargains on books, DVDs, Music CDs, and vintage vinyl at the Friends of the San Diego Public Library Book Sale. All proceeds for the book sale go to support the Friends of the San Diego Public Library. Please join us.

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday 9:30 am–6 pm
Tuesday 11:30 am–8 pm
Wednesday 11:30 am–8 pm
Thursday 9:30 am–6 pm
Friday 9:30 am–6 pm
Saturday 9:30 am–6 pm
Sunday Closed

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The January Book Club & Salon:  

The Tortilla Curtain  
by T. C. Boyle

The Tortilla Curtain was published in 1989 and went on to become one of T.C. Boyle’s most successful novels. It delves into middle-class values and their relation to the issues of racial bias, illegal immigration, poverty, and the American dream. The novel places the stories and events of an immigrant family and a middle-class suburbanite family back to back, making the realities and differences of the two families’ lifestyles very apparent. There is also a strong environmental theme throughout the novel, with animals and nature playing major parts in the story.  

The Tortilla Curtain was released during a time when the issue of illegal immigration was in the public limelight. Let’s face it, it hasn’t gone away as shown in our current presidential election. Although one couple is homeless and camps at the bottom of the Topanga Canyon area of Los Angeles, in the hills above Malibu, the other couple has recently moved into a gated community on top of the canyon. The two couples’ paths cross unexpectedly when Candido, the Mexican, is hit and injured by Delaney, the suburbanite. For different reasons, each man prefers not to call the police or an ambulance—Candido is afraid of being deported and Delaney is afraid of ruining his perfect driving record. From that moment on, the two couples are constantly influenced by the others.  

The division of University Heights between two planning groups was recently described by Planning Commission member Theresa Quiroz as a “mistake” that should be rectified. Ms. Quiroz articulated the compelling land use planning rationale that the planning staff could not: “[T]hat the more complete unified plan happens when communities are kept whole, when residents have a strong sense of place and belonging, and they all want to work together to reach one unified vision. Separating the community takes away.”  

Administrative Guidelines state that planning groups have a “Duty to Represent Community Interests” and to seek out broad community participation, including networking with other active local organizations. By failing to engage with Uptown Planners, the North Park Planning Group has failed in its duty. In fact, it has done quite the opposite. By creating a decidedly unfriendly relationship with Uptown Planners, and by exhibiting a combative and demeaning attitude toward UHCA members it has deterred community participation and worked to divide our historically unified community.

More than 500 University Heights residents petitioned for one planning group under Uptown Planners. We can only speculate why, but a good guess might be the desire to participate in a planning forum where their contributions are welcome and respected.

UHCA would like nothing more than for City Council to change the boundaries today, but we recognize that this is a contentious issue that deserves careful consideration. So, today we ask the Council to take no action against the interests of the University Heights community and leave the boundary change to a later time. As Council Policy 600-24 states, “the City Council may change to a later time. As Council Policy 600-24 states, “the City Council may determine that a boundary other than that of an adopted plan is the appropriate boundary for a community planning group oversight.” Additional time will allow all involved to make their case and elicit community support. —Bill Smith

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EIGHT YEARS LATER

Eight years ago, we started a journey together. You entrusted me to be your voice at City Hall and, by working together these past eight years, we accomplished tremendous things for University Heights and our city. As your Councilmember, it has always been important for me to deliver results for your neighborhood. That’s why, during my first term, we formalized an agreement and broke ground on the Birney Elementary joint-use field. Now, during non-school hours, families have a place to gather and recreate together just steps from their homes. As you might imagine, on-street parking tends to be a common concern for University Heights locals. To fix this, we worked to replace old parking meters with new smart ones that accept credit cards and eliminate the need to find change to feed the meter. We also made significant strides toward increasing the inventory of spaces by converting existing spots from parallel or angled parking to head-in parking. It’s a small change that has created more than 100 new places to park in University Heights. With the adoption of our City’s Climate Action Plan, it’s essential that we also implement alternative means of transportation for people to utilize. We did this with the introduction of MTS Rapid service and the Rapid 215, which travels from S3SU through University Heights to the Santa Fe Depot in Downtown. With Rapid 215 came infrastructure improvements for University Heights that positioned public transit as a more feasible alternative to driving. In addition, it gave transit riders more chances to access our great neighborhoods in District Three. More recently, we worked together to revitalize the University Heights Branch Library for its 100th Anniversary. Our public libraries serve as community centers where friends and neighbors can meet and learn together and, as such, it’s my hope that the improvements we made will continue to invite more and more University Heights neighbors to engage with our library. Friends, these are just some of the many neighborhood projects I’m most proud of during my eight years as your Councilmember. While the sun has set on my City Council tenure, I know we will have the chance to work together again in a different capacity to tackle issues that continue to need attention like homelessness and infrastructure. In the meantime, I know University Heights is in good hands with Councilmember-elect Chris Ward. Above all else, please know that it has been my honor to represent and work with you. Thank you, University Heights! Former Third District Councilmember Todd Gloria now represents the 78th Assembly District, which includes University Heights.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

What an incredible six years this has been. When I was elected to the state Assembly in 2010, I had aspirations to represent my constituents the best way I knew how, but I had no idea I would later be elected Speaker of the Assembly. No San Diego had ever served as Speaker. Now my time in the Assembly is over. On Election Day, I was honored to be elected by the voters of the 39th Senate District, which overlaps to a large degree with my 78th Assembly District. I begin my four-year Senate term on Dec. 5th. In the meantime, as I’m finishing my work as Assembly Speaker Emeritus, I’m reflecting on this amazing journey. When I arrived in Sacramento, California was in trouble—we faced a $30 billion deficit. Within four years, with hard work and great teamwork between Governor Jerry Brown and the Legislature, we were able to turn things around. In 2014, with help from the voters, we created a rainy-day fund. We also started to restore funding to programs that had been slashed. We reinvested in public schools and expanded child care and preschool. We reinvested in higher education and stopped tuition increases for California students. We created the first state Earned Income Tax Credit to augment the federal EITC—a proven anti-poverty tool. We also strengthened our business climate with widespread tax credits. We responded to the effects of the drought with a $7.5 billion water bond and bolstered our commitment to fighting climate change. I was particularly proud to represent California in Paris at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015. We funded new affordable housing, and, again with help from voters, created a program to provide housing for struggling military veterans. We strengthened our commitment to full equality for the LGBT community. We expanded family leave and strengthened our equal-pay law. We continued to protect a woman’s reproductive rights. We set the path to raise our minimum wage to $15 an hour. Put it together and the picture that emerges is hopeful. Our goal is to create a California where people can raise their families in clean, safe communities and small businesses can thrive and grow. I want to thank my constituents for their support. This truly is a team effort, and I can’t do it without you. From the bottom of my heart—thank you.

Speaker Emeritus Toni Atkins currently represents the 78th Assembly District, which includes University Heights. She will take office as state Senator for the 39th Senate District, which also includes University Heights, on Dec. 5, 2016.

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Swedishborgian Update

Impermanence teaches us that nothing stays forever, however some things are just not ready to go yet. When you understand impermanence, you find endless love and appreciation for all that exists. This is the case with the Swedishborgian Church in University Heights. It deserves to be loved and cared for and to live another 100 years. Emanuel Swedishborg said, “Love consists in desiring to give what is our own to another and feeling his delight as our own.” Noted Zen author D.T. Suzuki wrote in Swedishborg, “For you Westerners, it is Swedenborg who is your Buddha, it is he who should be read and followed!” The truth is we don’t want anyone to tear down the Swedishborgian Church. We want an opportunity to provide a place of refuge for the community. In just 14 days, our local community raised $103,800 towards the purchase of the church. We will open escrow within a week and we continue to spread awareness so we can reach our financial goal. The Dharma Bum Temple is a small 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization that for 10 years has operated on a $35,000 annual budget. We serve thousands of people every year for free. Life is precious so let’s do our best to build a spiritual home for the benefit of others. As a resident of University Heights, if you want to save the church and see it continue as a spiritual center rather than destroying a Louis John Gill architectural classic to build more condos, here is how you can help. Visit us online at www.dbtnewhome.com. —Jeffrey Zlotnik

HOLIDAYS WITH ROSEMARY

In lieu of our usual restaurant review, in this issue our Food Editor Andrea Bacal has instead chosen to share some of her favorite holiday recipes using rosemary, a seasonal favorite.

ROSEMARY CASHEWS

Keep these in a bowl for snacking on throughout the holiday season. They are addictive, delicious, and very easy to make!

2 1/2 cups unsalted cashews
2 Tbsp. coarsely ground fresh rosemary
1 Tbsp. olive oil or butter
1 Tbsp. dark brown sugar
1 Tbsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 1/2 tsp. cumin (optional)

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Place the nuts in a bowl. In a small, heavy saucepan over medium-low heat, warm the olive oil. Add the rosemary and stir until aromatic, about one minute. Pour the seasoned oil over the nuts. Add the sugar, cumin, salt, black pepper, and cayenne and stir to coat the nuts evenly. Transfer the nuts to a baking pan.

Bake, stirring occasionally, until the nuts are toasted, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a plate and let cool completely. If using already roasted cashews, check pan often to make sure they do not burn.

Store the nuts in an airtight container. Makes about 2 1/2 cups.

ROSEMARIE PARMESAN SHORTBREAD

Serve at any cocktail party or with appetizers before a holiday dinner. Elegant and unusual.

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup confectioners’ sugar
2 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 tsp. water, if needed
1/2 cup roasted and chopped hazelnuts (optional)

Put the flour, sugar, rosemary, salt, and Parmesan into a bowl of a food processor and pulse until combined. Add the butter and pulse just until a soft dough forms. The dough should hold together when squeezed with your hands. If not, add the water and pulse until combined.

Spread a large sheet of plastic wrap on a work surface and transfer the dough onto it. Using the plastic wrap as a guide, form the dough into a loose log along 1 side of the long direction of the log is tight and compact, about 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Chill in the refrigerator until firm, about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Slice the dough log into 1/3-inch thick slices and arrange on the lined sheets, about 1-inch apart. Bake until the edges are just beginning to brown, 12 to 14 minutes. If you want thinner pieces, cut thinner and shorten baking time.

Cool the shortbread on the pan for 5 minutes then transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Store the shortbread in an airtight container at room temperature until ready to serve.

You can make several batches of dough ahead of time, shape, wrap, and freeze them. When you are ready to bake, leave the frozen shortbread at room temperature for 1 hour before baking.

PET OF THE MONTH

A Tale of Two Kitties: Sam and Libbey

We fell in love with this sink full of adorable cats at a SPOT (Saving Pets One at a Time) foster home in early September. Barely two months old, the kittens didn’t look much like brother and sister, except for the way they stuck close together...and those ears.

Sam and Libbey have kept us laughing since the day we brought them home. Sam’s curiosity keeps his motor running at top speed most of the time, but he also loves to snuggle, curl up on your lap, and peacefully purr. Sister Libbey, who sneaks up on bare toes and races away when they move, also likes batting at dangling toy mice. She’s a frisky and friendly little gal. The two keep each other company, playing and exploring until they cuddle up together for a rest.

We’d like to thank the people at SPOT who made sure the little siblings were spayed/neutered, up-to-date on vaccines, dewormed, tested for FIV, and micro chipped before we adopted them.

FRIENDS OF OLD TROLLEY BARN PARK COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The results are in! In order to assess the needs, concerns, and great ideas of our community members concerning Old Trolley Barn Park, the Friends of Trolley Barn Park conducted a community survey between June and October of this year. Through the online Survey Monkey and paper surveys, we were able to collect input from an amazing 300 respondents on topics ranging from how the park is used to major areas of concern and great ideas for how to improve our park. A more detailed presentation is planned for the next University Heights Community Association (UHCA) meeting on December 1st.

The community uses the park for a variety of purposes, including exercise, community events—such as concerts and movie night—and family time. Perhaps not surprisingly, the biggest concerns for respondents are vagrancy, fears of drug and alcohol abuse in the park, and a desire for better lighting. Community members would like to see more events held at the park, as well as the addition of more benches and tables and changes to the structure of the park that might inhibit the presence of vagrants.

Respondents were eager to share their thoughts in written comments and many voiced their desires for bathrooms and a small dog park. Another common written refrain was that, “This was once a great park, now it’s frightening,” expressing the need for maintenance and other improvements. Finally, the survey collected more than 130 emails from neighbors eager to help out with cleanup events, coordinating with law enforcement and volunteering for community events. The survey results will be used to inform decision-making and set priorities as we move forward to preserve and improve this community gem. —Jill Briggs Campbell

— Andrea Bacal

— Andrea Bacal

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May you and your family enjoy all the warmth this season has to offer.
Have a wonderful holiday and a New Year filled with peace and happiness.

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