Ringing the Bell for Cyclists | Page 11

“comfort station.”

often having to play catch up as it relates to the City Park & Recreation department, our community’s voice was about ongoing maintenance. Poor conditions in existing restrooms were documented by The San Diego Union-Tribune in May 2019 (tinyurl.com/ uhsd.library.news). Based on the numbers in the city-commissioned report, it is estimated that operation of a comfort facility (toilets, materials, repairs) could approach $100,000 annually.

The engineering and outreach cost is budgeted at $500,000, and building a comfort station was estimated to cost a minimum of $1.5 million in 2019. That number has likely increased substantially since then.

UHCA News asked for input in the November 2019 issue, and published community responses in the following December/January issue (both are available at www.uhsd.org/news). The overwhelming input from these comments was 3 to 1 against adding restrooms. This was not a scientific poll, but other avenues of public outreach in the past also generated a strong degree of opposition to the idea.

The UH Park, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Group, our community’s voice to the City Park & Recreation department, unanimously rejected this idea after hearing comments from residents who attended the September 5, 2019 meeting.

UH residents attending a meeting with then-Councilmember Ward on September 14, 2019, presented a visual report of the conditions of various city park restrooms littered with needles and blood, and in sub-standard and filthy conditions, and expressed their opposition.

A common concern raised in the past was about ongoing maintenance. Poor conditions in existing restrooms were documented by The San Diego Union-Tribune in May 2019 (tinyurl.com/ uhsd.library.news) and an internal report commissioned by the City Parks & Recreation department (tinyurl.com/ PBCrestrooms). Based on the numbers in the city-commissioned report, it is estimated that operation of a comfort station (toilets, materials, repairs) could approach $100,000 annually.

“City maintenance crews work diligently to make sure comfort stations are clean and stocked each morning,” Tim Graham, a spokesman for the department, told the San Diego Union-Tribune in the May 2019 article. “Unfortunately, comfort stations are often a primary target for vandalism, graffiti and theft, which results in an unpleasant and unwrinking experience for those patrons who wish to use the facility. City crews do their best, but are often having to play catch up as it relates to cleaning and restocking a vandalized comfort station.”

North Park Planning Committee’s Urban Design Project Review Subcommittee met recently to discuss a path forward for a new, expanded North Park Branch Library. Various designs from other cities showing libraries incorporated into private development projects were presented, and a motion originally scheduled for the February 15 NPPC meeting was delayed to the March 15 meeting to request that the City and NPPC work together to solicit proposals to build a new joint-use library facility, combined with other uses like senior or affordable housing.

The North Park branch was redesigned in 1987 to its current 8,000 square feet size but it remains one of the smaller libraries in the system, well under the NPPC standard of 15,000 square foot size guideline.

The UH branch library, in contrast, is much smaller at 3,749 square feet, one of the smallest branches in the system, and has been the subject of much community discussion to expand it for over a decade. Councilmember Whitburn included a request for the FY23 City budget to include funds to begin exploration of how to expand, remodel, rebuild, or move the UH branch library.

UHCA News produced a special section about our library and community needs in the July-August 2021 edition (www.uhsd.org/news), where results from a community survey done in May 2021 were shared. Facilities (and size) were a recurring issue that people wanted addressed as we look to the future. With two large developments expansion that is happening in the southern part of UH along Park Blvd.

Because we are divided between two planning groups, NPCC east of Park Blvd. and Uptown Planners west of Park Blvd., neither planning group has taken up the UH branch library as a focus. The time to address our community’s library needs is now, and either or both planning groups need to seriously look at our growth, density, and library is challenged to meet the current needs of our community, much less the rapid expansion that is happening in the southern part of UH along Park Blvd. Because we are divided between two planning groups, NPCC east of Park Blvd. and Uptown Planners west of Park Blvd., neither planning group has taken up the UH branch library as a focus. The time to address our community’s library needs is now, and either or both planning groups need to seriously look at our growth, density, and help us move forward with a library branch that will meet the needs of our community. We believe that the same approach of a private/public partnership makes a great deal of sense and implore the planning groups and city to work together. UHBCD and the other UH groups including UH Historical Society and UHCA are ready to work together with the City to move forward.

— Ernestine Bow, Board Treasurer, UHBCD and member Community Coalition of UH

North Park Branch, SDPL

Chicago, IL branch library mixed use project: 15,600 sq ft library and 44 units of affordable senior apartments

Corinel, OR library mixed use project: 12,650 sq ft library with senior courtyard, 2,900 sq ft UHBCD branch, and 45 affordable apartments intended for seniors

Photos by Adriana Holida, Voice of San Diego, 1/1/2021

Councilmember Whittburn advised UHCA leadership in early February that Mayor Gloria and his staff were proceeding with initial engineering plans and gathering community outreach regarding the installation of “comfort stations” (restrooms) in Old Trolley Barn Park. Mr. Whittburn indicated that he isn’t taking a position on the idea yet, stating, “We need to have a clear voice from the community — people who use the park and live near the park – to guide any decision of this magnitude.”

We need your input (again)!

IS NORTH PARK GETTING A NEW LIBRARY?

NEXT UHCA MEETING

MAR.3
6:45 PM

FEATURED SPEAKER: ROB NIKOLEWSKI

.getAttribute(3,3).getAttribute(4,4).getAttribute(4,4).getAttribute(4,4)
Hal Sadler, prominent modernist architect in San Diego, passed away in January. Our library was inspired by Hal’s design. Almost 6 years ago we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our library where Hal was our guest of honor. — Ron McGraw

IN MEMORIAM
HAL SADLER

PRESIDENT’S CORNER
MARC JOHNSON

The days are getting longer, my Roses are exploding with new blooms, and that amazing feeling of spring awakening is all around us. What I wasn’t expecting was turning on the air conditioner in mid-February! Such life is in San Diego, with sometimes unpredictable, but (almost) always near-perfect weather.

Spring is one of my favorite times here. Maybe a little more so now as the pandemic is finally starting to level off. As mask mandates expire and people begin to get back to “normal.”

Donor $ _______ Donation for Keeping Up the Good Work (Donate as a member or non-member)

Volunteer Your Time on a UHCA Committee!

MONTHLY REGISTRATION OFFERED ONLY $25.00
REGISTRATION OPENS ONLINE FEBRUARY 12TH
WWW.SDRECONNECT.COM

February! Such is life in San Diego, with all around us. What I wasn’t expecting was turning on the air conditioner in mid-February! Such is life in San Diego, with sometimes unpredictable, but (almost) always near-perfect weather.

MEMBERSHIP

Join your neighbors to keep UH safe.

A portion of your membership is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more info, email membership@uhsd.org

The University Heights Community Association (UHCA), founded in 1983, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, member-supported community association dedicated to improving the quality of life on the sense of community in San Diego’s University Heights.

Join, Renew, Donate, or Volunteer Online at UHSOD.org.

UHCA Officers

President Marc Johnson, President@uhsd.org
Vice President Stu McGraw, VP@uhsd.org
Secretary Event Orlesky, secretary@uhsd.org
Treasurer Brent Orlesky, treasurer@uhsd.org

Website uhsd.org
Facebook @UniversityHeightsCommunityAssociation
Twitter @UniversityHeights_sdcommunity

UHCA News

University Heights Community Association | March 2022 www.uhsd.org

Yearly Membership

Donor $ _______ Donation for Keeping Up the Good Work (Donate as a member or non-member)

Volunteer Your Time on a UHCA Committee!

- Beautification & Planning Keep UH beautiful.
- Blockwalker Help deliver UHA News to neighborhood residences and businesses.
- Marketing & Merchandising Promote UHCA via marketing/advertising, visual arts, photography, and product merchandising.
- Membership Help meet record goals for 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 the UHCA Areas.
- Program & Events Plan and oversee the various events and general meetings.

A portion of your membership is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more info, email membership@uhsd.org

UHCA News

Electrical Tiger Tattoo

2 UHCA News

Golden Ostrich

Business Golden Ostrich

( ) $150 Business Golden Ostrich
( ) $75 Business Plume

Our library was inspired by Hal’s design.
UHCA News

University Heights Community Association

March 2022

3

UHCA MEETING NOTES
IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

February 3 UHCA Community Meeting Summary

The February 3 UHCA Community Meeting was held at 7 pm via Zoom, with 35 attendees. The full meeting is available for replay at www.uhsd.org/attend-a-meeting.

Crime Watch: Officer Michael Hayes and UH resident Andy Lange, who had an article featured in the February 2022 UHCA News regarding the difficulty of accessing assistance with removing canyon encampments, discussed homelessness and the danger of fire in our canyons.

Announcements: UHCA President Marc Johnson opened the meeting by welcoming us to 2022 and thanking all our volunteers. He thanked Jane Gilbert and welcomed Thalia Diessren to the UHCA News and Nikki Mirasola to the Programs Team. Marc noted that the Birney Giving Tree raised $3,365 in gift cards distributed to 26 families and that the traffic circles along Meade have been corrected. Marc welcomed residents to join UHCA’s email list at www.cc-uhs.org.

Events: Sta McGraw reported that the Birney Bee Hunt was a success and Cookies with the Cops will be held on March 14. Please Save the Date for our UH Community Yard Sale on June 4.

Library Updates: UH branch library manager, Rachel Esquerra, shared that the My First Library Card program has launched for children ages 3 and under. Cute gift sets are available. Additionally, a 50% off pass to a list of museums is available for free. Also, the San Diego Public Library has launched a new app for reporting non-emergency issues, download this app for reporting non-emergency issues, affected by the UH phone book.

Updates from Elected Officials:

Benny Carwright from Stephen Whitburn’s office shared that their top 4 priorities are homelessness, pedestrian and mobility safety, infrastructure, and crime. Funding has been requested for a number of UH items. Pop-up tours resume in March. Abbey Reuter, Nathan Fletcher’s new rep, reported they are working to increase COVID testing capacities, and funds have been allocated for Community Gardens. Additionally, the SD County Sheriff has retired, and Fletcher’s office has released a “3-year Impact Report” detailing the efforts of Mr. Fletcher’s supervisory work since 2010.

Christopher Gris from Chris Ward’s office shared new legislation Ward has introduced, including laws regarding gun and ammo sales restrictions, the ability to sue gun manufacturers, and expedited teacher credentialing processes for partners of Armed Forces members. The finished product, one of the first new inner-city parks to be built in many years, lacks the traditional tennis courts, softball diamonds, and basketball courts. University Heights residents told the city parks department they didn’t want those; instead, they got a huge expanse of grass accent with picnic benches and concrete chess and checkers tables. Police wanted a park that didn’t attract transients or give drug dealers a place to hide, so there are no flower beds, restrooms or thick grasses of trees.

As previously published, there are arguments both for and against adding a restroom, and UHCA wants to help the City gain a clear view of what UH residents think about this issue. We also want the city to explore all possible options, including public/private partnerships with neighboring businesses (including new ones currently being built).

Old Trolley Barn Park was conceived and developed as a “neighborhood park,” smaller in scale and with fewer amenities than a “community park” like North Park Community Park. When it was originally designed, restrooms were rejected by the community and weren’t normally included as amenities in neighborhood parks. The San Diego Reader reported on the opening of Old Trolley Barn Park in the April 4 1991 edition:

The finished product, one of the first new inner-city parks to be built in many years, lacks the traditional tennis courts, softball diamonds, and basketball courts. University Heights residents told the city parks department they didn’t want those; instead, they got a huge expanse of grass with picnic benches and concrete chess and checkers tables. Police wanted a park that didn’t attract transients or give drug dealers a place to hide, so there are no flower beds, restrooms or thick grasses of trees.

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RESTROOMS continued from front page

UHCA, as part of the Community Coalition of University Heights, has developed a survey which will be open through April, and we encourage every UH resident to visit UHCA and the city know where you stand on this issue.

The survey includes comment areas, and select comments may be edited and used when the results are reported back. We will also have open discussion at upcoming meetings where people can voice their thoughts, and we expect the city will host additional “listening sessions” as well.

It is important that UH residents let our elected officials know what they want in Old Trolley Barn Park. More than 30 years ago, what would have been an unwanted development project became the park that that is a jewel in UH today, and that happened because of community activists and neighbors who stood up and fought for what was needed. UHCA was born from those efforts, and we continue with that same mission of making sure that UH voices are heard by our City leaders.

Marc Johnson, President UHCA

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS BOUNDARIES AND ZONE WATCH

Zone Watch Coordinators manage email lists of participants wishing to receive University Heights crime watch information and updates. Download more on the UH Zone Watch program at uhsd.org or contact your zone’s coordinator or Nan McGraw.

Nan McGraw
emmsgant@aol.com

Pam Isaac
pamisacase3@gmail.com

Mary Lange
marylange@uhsd.org

Heather Wilcox
zonewatchchp@gmail.com

Tamara Zhyhyl
tamara@tamarazhylestate.com

Nan McGraw
emmsgant@aol.com

UH PHONE BOOK

Emergency • Police • Fire • Medical
Non-Emergency • Burglary • Activity • Harassment • Outbreak Team, etc.

SD City Services: Emergency & Non-Emergency
Smoke, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide

Online: www.sandiego.gov/911 www.sandiego.gov/psd/psd-departments

Alert San Diego: Reverse 911 notification to mobilize phones for emergencies requiring evacuations.

2-1-1 San Diego Community Information: CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Covered California, etc.

Abandoned Vehicles

Alley Birney Elementary Office

Animals / Non-Emergency

Brush and Weed Abatement

Code Violations
COVID-19  City of San Diego Daily Updates

Crime Stoppers TIP Line

Department of Environmental Health Public Health/Flats/Floden

Diverted Power Problems

Emergency Water / Sewer Repair / Sink Holes

Narcotics Suspicious drug house / anonymous

Download this app for reporting non-emergency issues, like potholes, graffiti, code violations, overwatering, sidewalk problems, etc. to the City of San Diego.

911 • 619-531-2000
911 • 619-527-7500
211 or 858-300-1211
619-497-3500
619-760-2675
619-533-4444
619-228-5500
www.sandiego.gov/coronavirus
988-580-TIPS (8477)
619-692-4800
619-252-4613
info@stonewallcitizens.org
911 • 619-260-0668
nmcsan@aol.com
Info@stonewallcitizens.org
888-580-TIPS (8477)
858-694-2888
988-511-2943
619-515-3525
619-531-2488
https://getafcon.com

SLOW DOWN SIGNS

Speeding on neighborhood streets in UH continues to be a problem. Shaving time off trips by speeding has small benefits and high risks. PLEASE SLOW DOWN! Please email signs@uhsd.org.

DISASTER CONTACTS

In case of a major disaster, have two out of area contacts handy. When the power is out, kitchen phones may not work. Make sure your cell phone is charged. Call 911 for updated information.

211 for updated information.
Lemonade Berry (Rhus integrifolia) is similar to Lemonade Berry — an evergreen shrub with small, spiky leaves. Look closely and you notice the petals are more separated, the filaments (little stalks) are longer, and the ovary (center) is darker, among other fine distinctions.

Next is Black Sage (Salvia mellifera), a smaller shrub with soft, aromatic leaves, about six feet off the trail. These flowers form whorls around the upright flower stalks. They also have five petals, but the two on top and the three below have been fused into two “lips,” a fact which gives the entire (Mint) family its old Latin name, Labiatae.

Right next to the Black Sage, you’ll find a plant where the white to pink petals have completely fused into tiny, hanging bells. Mission Manzanita (Arctostaphylos spp.) they both have these bell-like flowers and shedding bark, but the bark of true manzanitas is a deep red.

At the fence, you’ll find Wild Cucumber (Marah macrocarpus). These petals are more separated and don’t have a hint of pink. This plant is a vine that grows each year from a large tuber and festoons its flowers over the branches of woody shrubs. In this way, it grabs sunlight before other plants leaf out and reproduces faster. If the flowers are already spent, you’ll see the start of the plant’s spiny green fruits, aka “porcupine eggs.”

American Ethnic Grub

A BUSY SPRING AHEAD

The Beautification Team met via Zoom on Wednesday, February 2, and anticipates a busy spring ahead. The following projects and topics were addressed at the meeting:

A mini-cleanup of Park Boulevard from Meade Avenue to Adams is being organized for early March to address the graffiti and multitude of stickers that have proliferated over the last six months. All volunteers will be provided with the necessary supplies to remove the graffiti and stickers.

An Adopt-a-Tree program is being created to help revive and make thrive the trees planted alongside Birney Elementary on Meade Avenue and Campus Drive. Additional trees throughout the neighborhood that need care are being identified. Our goal is to launch the adopt-a-tree initiative in the spring.

The canyon by the 163 freeway entrance as it comes up from Mission Valley continues to be a major issue, as reported by Andy Lange in the February issue the UHCA News. Citizens are encouraged to submit requests for trash mitigation on the Get It Done app.

Events are coming back this year! We need help with manning tables, selling UHCA merchandise, and helping with set-up and tear-down. Help your community, meet your neighbors, and have a great time doing it! Reach out to us at www.uhsd.org/volunteer or email events@uhsd.org.

We look forward to seeing you in person soon!

Crossword (page 9) solution:
ZONE WATCH

Reporting Homeless Issues via Get It Done

We receive a high volume of emails, phone calls, and reports to dispatch regarding homeless people in need. The city has added a new web link to information regarding the Homeless Outreach Feature on the Get It Done app, explaining how to report homeless issues, including camps, and how these reports are handled by the providers of homeless services. Below is the link to the web page and the information for your reading and review.


Have you ever noticed a community member in need or a person experiencing homelessness in your neighborhood? Get It Done now offers an updated feature designed to better align with the City’s new, more comprehensive approach to addressing homelessness in San Diego.

When you submit a new “Homeless Outreach / Encampment” report on the app or website, you will be prompted to answer a few questions. One of these questions asks whether people are actively located at the reported site.

If people are present, outreach specialists will be dispatched to identify, engage, and connect individuals with supportive services within 48 hours of when your report was submitted. Responding outreach specialists include staff from Alpha Project, Father Joe’s Villages, PATH, Downtown San Diego Partnership, and other local service providers that are part of the City of San Diego’s Coordinated Street Outreach Program. If outreach specialists are unable to engage with the individuals onsite within 48 hours, a team from the Neighborhood Policing Division (NPD) - which includes officers with the San Diego Police Department’s Homeless Outreach Team - may respond to the report.

If people are not present at the site, the report is sent to NPD and may be routed to the City’s Environmental Services Department to be assessed for abatement, depending on where the encampment is located and what has been left behind. They may also respond to a report to remove any trash or debris after outreach specialists and/or NPD have had the opportunity to offer services to anyone present at the reported site.

The Get It Done team will continue to monitor feedback from users, residents, people experiencing homelessness, service providers, and City employees to identify any adjustments that may need to be made to improve the “Homeless Outreach / Encampment” report type.

As a reminder, Get It Done is only for Non-Emergency reports. In an emergency, please always dial 9-1-1. If you are experiencing homelessness, please call 2-1-1 or visit 211sandiego.org to access resources.

All requests for assistance for homeless issues, including reporting people in need and camps, should be made to the city through the Get It Done app/website. The app should not be used when witnessing criminal behavior and acts, which should be reported to dispatch, as noted in the above information, via the Non-Emergency line or 911.

— Officer David Surwilo
San Diego Police Department
Community Relations Officer, Western Division

From Mankind’s Beginning - Mother Nature Nurtures Still

from the rooted recesses of all beginnings
her shadow reins supreme within our souls
despite mankind’s narrow understandings
her depth lingers - yet elusive to modern vision
she is ever present - here as usher - our template

she speaks to us with the scent of the rose
prick of the thorn - wave of palms - silence of hope
is she not the breeze that recollects that which
has been lost in minds unwitting - primal forgetfulness
our urge to propagate - to grow - impulse to prune

does not her wind teach us to dance her
subtle melodies bless us with the gift of music
and what of our will to press onward - endure
does she not offer, in survivals everyplace,
strength of power examples - our intention’s volition

has she not taught us to grief loss - bless blissfulness
what directs spirits in times of need or actions taken
did she not encourage us to swim - crawl - breathe
she is our storm - the rain that rivers through our lives
back to our beginning as she guides us into death

Jan Von Erb 7/2021

Don’t make a move without us!
WE CAN HELP WITH ALL YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS!

“Mary Anne and Anastasia are the very best! Thanks for your amazing attentiveness and attention to detail on everything; your constant professionalism coupled with your winning personality; and your tiger instinct that enabled us to secure this competitive, multi-offer deal!! I think this is the sixth property we have collaborated on and we'll keep coming back! You make it so easy. Thank you!!” - Carin C. | Jan 2022

“Anastasia and Mary Anne are the best real estate team in San Diego. They are honest, competent, savvy, and will work for your interests. You have to choose Mary Anne and Anastasia.” - GUY B. | FEB 2022

Mary Anne Stevens
(619) 871-0635

Anastasia Brewer
(619) 992-1912

Don’t make a move without us!
# March 2022

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Day</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SDUSD Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UH Park &amp; Rec Meeting</td>
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<td>UHCA Beautification Meeting</td>
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<td>Hillcrest Farmers Market</td>
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<td>Cookies with the Cops</td>
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<td>SDUSD Board Meeting</td>
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<td>International Women’s Day</td>
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<td>North Park Planning Committee Board Elections</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>No UH Library Task Force Meeting</td>
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<td>St. Patrick’s Day</td>
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<td>SDUSD Board Meeting</td>
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<td>World Water Day</td>
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<td>SDUSD Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Spring Begins</td>
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<td>SDUSD Board Meeting</td>
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**Important Dates**

- **March 13**: Daylight Saving Time Begins
- **March 17**: St. Patrick’s Day
- **March 20**: Spring Begins
- **March 23**: World Water Day
- **April 29**: April UHCA News Out

**Contact Information**

- **Twiggs Adams Avenue**: 2804 Adams Ave • 619, 296. 4077
- **Twiggs University Heights**: 4590 Park Blvd • 619, 295. 0616

**Community Resources**

- **Twiggs Adams Avenue**: www.twiggs.org
- **University Heights Community Association**: www.uhsd.org
Birney Buzz

And Just Like That, Halfway Through the Year

Last year, during this time, we were still doing distance learning, not knowing when our kids were heading back to campus and the school year seemed to drag. Although not quite the pandemic “normal,” this year seems to be flying by. Like the rest of the country, there are COVID cases affecting Birney unfortunately, but the safety protocols are being followed and the school is staying open.

At Birney, the kindergarten classes traditionally mark the 100th day of school by gathering 100 goldfish crackers to create an ocean collage, frustrated at his lack of focus and then sadly skipping it with my youngest last year, due to distance learning. So, this year, I welcome the sight of t借此, but proud parents of the kindergarteners, bringing their artwork in and carrying on the tradition.

This year, the Birney students also continued their annual tradition of participating in the Great Kindness Challenge, which is part of a global initiative by Kids For Peace, to encourage kids to do as many acts of kindness as they can in one week. The acts are fairly simple, like smiling at 25 people or going out of your way to help someone. Birney created a kindness wall where kids can write notes for other students. You can find out more about the challenge at thegreatkindnesschallenge.com.

Along with the old traditions, we created something new this year. The 1st Birney Bee Hunt took place on January 29th and was an on-foot scavenger hunt around University Heights and required teams to solve riddles, do video and photo challenges and interact with participating sponsors. We had 75 teams vying for three $100 grand prizes and a raffle for an Eco Boats rental. While the ultimate goal was to raise money for the IB program, raising over $4,800, the end result was a fun, community-building event for Birney families and the University Heights community, which was much needed during this time. With the success of this one, we know this will become an annual tradition.

The 12th annual Run for the Green jogathon fundraiser is scheduled to take place from March 14 to 18th. Our Birney farmstand occurs on the 2nd or 3rd Saturday of the month at Twiggs on Park. We welcome all sponsors and donors for all Birney events, so please contact us at info@friendsofalicebirney.org if you would like more information. Please visit us at friendsofalicebirney.org for more information on all our events!

— Ysuyah Hallman, Proud Birney parent and Friends of Alice Birney Elementary (FOABE) Board Member

Birney Bees at the 1st Annual Hive Hunt, a scavenger hunt fundraiser around University Heights

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Bee Season?

Did you notice a swarm of Birney Elementary families dressed in BEE-utiful outfits buzzing about the neighborhood on Saturday January 29th? It was all fun and games at The Friends of Alice Birney Elementary Foundation’s first annual (socially-distanced) Birney “Hive Hunt”. Scavenger Hunt race and fundraiser around University Heights. Over 70 teams (around 280 children and adults) solved riddles, performed challenges, and raced on foot to various locations to earn points. The Community Association in partnership with Original Skin & Body Care offered bean bag toss, ring toss, and ostrich stickers for the kids, Pop Pfe Co., Stella Jean’s Ice Cream, Park & Rec, Tapias Coffee, Fibre the Venue & Salon, Diversionary Theatre, Twigs Bakery & Coffeehouse, Cecilia’s Fine Jewelry, Mary Anne Stevens & Anastasia Brewer Real Estate, Kairoa Brewing Company, Mission Hills Nursery, Promethean One, Kumon Math & Reading Center Kearny Mesa, and John Mark Music Instruction all sponsored and supported the event.

The Hive Hunt wrapped up with families enjoying treats from some amazing food trucks: The Pizza Boys, Gelsi Italian Ice, Toco Tamales, and more! UHCA was able to raise $4,500 for the school. Congratulations, Birney Bees, on a successful Hunt! We’ll be watching for you next year!

— Brent Orlinsky

Reflections on Fall Semester, Covid Year 3, at Roosevelt

The period between winter break and spring break is traditionally a grind for teachers, administrators, and students alike. After the winter holidays, reality sets in, with the reward of the next respite vanishingly distant. Add to that bleakness the stress of a pandemic that teases us with promises of its departure only to rush back toward us in new and chaotic ways, and you have the context for the current moment in schools across the country.

It’s been a rough couple of years for teachers, school administrators, students, and parents everywhere. But as a parent of two students at Roosevelt International Middle School, I have only become increasingly impressed at the way our school community has come together during this troubled and troublesome time. It would be perfectly reasonable for all the stakeholders to succumb to gloom and malaise under these conditions. Or worse, the bickering and vitriol we see in videos of school board meetings, political rallies, or even grocery stores and airplanes. A lot of grownups seem to have lost their minds. The kids, for the most part, seem to be handling things with considerably more maturity.

When I hear horror stories from friends in real life and online about how their schools and school districts are blowing it, I almost feel bad telling them how well Roosevelt has been handling the stress to its system. Even during the national wildfire of the Omicron variant, there were relatively few cases among students, and no outbreaks requiring school closure or even causing high numbers of absences. The administration has been transparent about challenges (Covid related and not) it faces, and has inspired families to rally to help overcome them.

My own experiences as a parent volunteer helping to run the After School Enrichment clubs has introduced me to other families who have displayed patience and grace at every turn, even in situations that could easily have been contentious. In a recent Zoom school community meeting, Principal Steinberger confirmed that this attitude is widespread, explaining how thankful he is that Roosevelt parents and guardians have reacted to every new curveball with kindness and equanimity.

I’m not sure how to account for the remarkable esprit de corps among this wildly diverse group, many of whom have never met one another face to face. It might be the inspiring way the administration and teachers have stayed cool and effective under tremendous stress. It may be the fact that the students, despite what anyone may say about “kids these days,” have proven to be resilient troopers who complain far less than we did back in my day. In any case, all the Roosevelt parents I know consider themselves lucky to be part of this community.

— Andy Hinds

LOTUS ACCOUNTING & TAX SERVICES

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**Friends of the UH Library**

**A Pot of Books at the End of the Rainbow**

It’s hard to believe that we are already in the third month of 2022. March in University Heights is a busy time as days are growing longer and warmer and we spend more time outside enjoying the beauty of our neighborhood.

March is also a splendid month to explore the pot of gold filled with stories of fantasy and mystery at the University Heights Library to celebrate Irish heritage and St. Patrick’s Day. The Irish are known for having good stories, and our library will surely be at the end of the rainbow for reading.

And while you are there, March is Women’s History Month and a fantastic opportunity to pick up a book about the amazing and vital roles of women in American history and beyond. This year’s theme, “Women Providing Healing. Promoting Hope,” is not only a tribute to the work of caregivers and frontline workers during the pandemic, but recognizes the ways women have provided healing and hope throughout history. Our library will have plenty of recommendations on incredible women for you and your family.

It’s never too early to save a date. Next month, “Connect with Your Library” during National Library Week, April 3-9. Be sure to connect with the amazing and helpful staff at UH Library as the week gets closer for events and recommendations. We look forward to connecting with you!

Finally, if you have not yet joined or renewed your Friends of UH Library membership, you can download a membership form at https://www.friendsoftheuhlibrary.org/become-a-member, or please contact us at FriendsWLBahmany@gmail.com and we will be happy to send you a form.

Thank you for your support.

—John Hoyt, Board Member

Friends of the University Heights Library

_The Friends of the San Diego Public Library is a California Tax Exempt Non-Profit Corporation (tax ID #94-3173747) under IRS 501(c)(3). Books, membership dues, and donations may be matched by the City of San Diego and used to support programs and purchase books, materials, and equipment._

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**Between the Covers**

**Spring at the Library**

With spring comes new beginnings, and the University Heights Branch Library is no exception. If you know a young person (6-13 years of age) who has never had a library card before, now is the time to encourage them to participate in SDPL’s My First Library Card program. Not only is this a great opportunity (see our Facebook page), but it is also a way to promote early literacy for the benefit of tomorrow’s movers and shakers.

Also new at “UH” are our fresh faces: Jeff Garthaus (me), and Martin Kessler, who is on loan from the Central Library, downtown. We hope he stays with us long enough, or is quickly and knowledgeably. It is fashionable to regard both people and books as having equal importance within the library space, so stop by and say, “Hi!”

My areas of expertise are music and motorcycling, while Martin’s intellectual scope is completely unlimited. If we can’t answer your questions, we will certainly point you in the right direction.

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**Pet of the Month Max**

This is Max! He’s an eleven-year-old Yorkshire Terrier weighing in at six pounds of pure cuteness. He’s very friendly with everyone he meets but shy around most dogs until he gets to know them. You’ll recognize Max by his big ears and frosted face. He may be a senior with a young spirit. So he was quite ready to get up and go on numerous walks per day. He gets so happy when we go out that I can’t mention the word “walk” or he starts panting and racing around the house in anticipation.

He just learned to fetch. It took a little longer, as Leased Books are popular books that cannot be placed on hold, and they can be checked out for a limited time. Max goes on full alert awaiting the sound of the doorbell. If he is an old dog, so was he still a spring in his step! He joined our family as a wee pup of just six weeks, but Max had bowed legs so he wasn’t considered qualified to be shown. My Mom, Angela, searched far and wide for a Yorkshire with an abundance of charm and personality that would make her laugh. In her eyes he was absolute perfection. He grew her six years of joy until she passed away in 2016.

Shortly thereafter, Max and my Dad, Gerry, moved to a senior community in La Mesa. For the next few years, they enjoyed each other’s company and even participated in a holiday costume contest where they won “Best in Show” wearing matching Reheeve and Rufferee striped shirts, beating out 30 other contestants.

In the fall of 2020, my Dad moved to a new community where no pets were allowed. That’s how Max came to live with us in University Heights. I work from home, and Max has added so much value to my life. We especially love to go on numerous walks per day. He gets so happy when we go out that I can’t mention the word “walk” or he starts panting and racing around the house in anticipation.

His favorite place to explore is along the canyon edge near Golden Gate Drive overlooking Mission Valley. Our walks could also be called “smell adventures.” They go something like this: Five steps, stop and smell intently for about 5 minutes, repeat. Max goes on full alert when we see white-tailed bunnies. Yorkies were originally bred to catch mice and rats in England’s industrial mills and coal mines, so those natural instincts to chase are still ingrained in him.

Because he is conveniently small in size, Max enjoys going on road trips. His most recent one was to visit his buddy, Huxley (an Australian Shepherd), who lives in Laguna Beach.

They say you can teach an old dog new tricks, but Max proves that wrong. He just learned to fetch. It took a little time and lots of salmon jerky treats from Sprouts, but he will now fetch his favorite toy, mini tennis ball and a stuffed banana.

Max is our IFFF (Best Furry Friend Forever) and he’d like to say anyone interested, “I can’t wait to see you around the neighborhood!”

—Thalia Driessen

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**Sign-up and learn how to make your voice be heard**

**www.cc-uh.org**

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**UH CAN**

**University Heights Community Action Network**

UH CAN is a way for UH residents and business owners to receive updates on issues that need input, from City budget matters, development, policy, or other matters that can be influenced by hearing directly from constituents.

Once you sign up, you will receive action alerts when items come up for City Council or department hearings or are open for public comments.

UH CAN is made possible by the Community Coalition of University Heights, which is UH CAN, UH Community Development Corp., and UH Historical Society.

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**Our Representatives**

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COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

PARKING CHANGE

On Wednesday, February 9, 2022, I received a Notice of Parking Change to my street, the 4300 block of Mississippi Street between El Cajon Blvd. and Meade Avenue. The notice, which contained serious errors, claimed that the City of San Diego was proposing the addition of 17 parking spaces on the east side of the street by changing that side to head-in parking, departing from the present parallel parking configuration. A dated Google satellite photo of the street was included with the proposed spots designated.

This document was more of a poll than an actual notice, any negative response being requested within 60 days of the February 1st dated notice.

I contacted the City’s Senior Traffic Engineer per information on the notice and spelled out what I felt were flaws in the plan and the notice itself listed briefly as follows:
1. Only ~7 spots will be gained, not 17. This is, intentional or not, a severe misrepresentation.
2. The Google photo does not reflect a privately owned restaurant with onsite parking required at permitting, that will be opening on the ECB corner soon.
3. A small parking lot had been removed to put that restaurant in.
4. Businesses along the 2100 block of ECB, including Boulevard Fitness, create parking congestion in the neighborhood 7 days a week as far away as Meade Avenue.
5. Our street, and likely others, will become that much more narrow and unsafe.
6. Construction in the area has consistently avoided or ignored resident concerns about parking problems due to overcrowding.
7. Some additional concerns that I have:
   - Head-in parking promotes left turns across traffic that diagonal parking does not.
   - My street is being proposed as a public parking lot due to previous lack of concern over community building and zoning objections.
   - If people are being dazed by the convenient math of the notice I received, how many other notices on how many other streets are being misinformed in the same way to perhaps get a favorable response - or lack of response – as this poll is set up.
   - A short term rental with illegal garage conversion next door impacts parking. Although reported, it remains, to my knowledge, an illegal yet operational business and contributes to the overall parking situation, as do other short term rentals in the area with no controls on numbers of guests and cars.
   - I believe this situation impacts University Heights as a community.

— Thomas Burke, Mississippi Street

UHCA News is proud to provide neighbors with the opportunity to share their perspectives on issues that affect our community. Our editorial guidelines are available on our website at www.uhsd.org/submissions.

COMMUNITY ELECTION

Our future University Heights & Hillcrest How much is too much?

Uptown For All

Uptown Planners is the local Community Planning Group which serves in an advisory role to the city. Members have objected to programs for massive upzoning.

They don’t agree with:
- “More density”
- “More high-rises”
- “Take out the parking”
- “Close traffic lanes.”

The photo shows a massive project under construction. Two blocks of homes were torn down. No plans were made to ease the added traffic or provide new park space. It’s a mega-project with no public facilities: What kind of neighborhood will that be?

The city is planning massive upzoning programs which don’t include good urban planning. Here are three programs which would ruin many of our neighborhoods:

NAWAR, a new city on a sliver of land. It’s shocking: Buildings over 30 stories tall, on a piece of land hardly larger than several football fields. The density would be higher than Manhattan!

COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT for HILLCREST & UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS. This program aims to upzone Hillcrest and University Heights to add 10,000 to 15,000 units to the community plan. But Uptown already has very high density zoning, enough for 50-75 yrs. They want to close the traffic lanes on University Avenue and remove all the parking. Really?

SENATE BILL 10. The new law aims to override existing zoning— to allow 4 to 10 apartment units on any lot. Who wants to see homes torn down and replaced by expensive new projects?

WHAT TO DO: VOTE for your community. You live in Uptown if you’re in Hillcrest, Mission Hills, Bankers Hill, Middletown or University Heights (west of Park Blvd)

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UPCOMING ELECTION:
Fortunately, three excellent people have come forward, endorsed by Mission Hills Heritage.

MATTHEW BROWN
TONY SILVA
PATTY DUCEY-BROOKS

UPCOMING ELECTION: BRING YOUR ID and this notice
Feb. 24, 3:00-6:00 pm at Joyce Beers Center, 3900 Vermont
Feb. 28, 3:00-6:00 pm at Mission Hills-Hillcrest Library, 215 W Washington
Mar. 1, 4:00-7:30 pm at Joyce Beers Center, 3900 Vermont

UPTOGRAPHY FOR ALL QUALITY NEIGHBORHOODS, THRIVING BUSINESSES

www.UptownForAll.org
Or send an email to: Info@UptownForAll.org

PAID ADVERTISEMENT. UHCA DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY CANDIDATES FOR POLITICAL OFFICE.

Massive project: two blocks
FROM COUNCILMEMBER STEPHEN WHITBURN

Hello, University Heights!

As always, we continue to be busy at City Hall, and I wanted to update you on one particularly important topic: the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. The annual budget guides the resources our City will put into providing services and infrastructure and it is important to have input from our constituents throughout the process.

The first step in developing the budget is for each councilmember to create and submit an annual memorandum outlining the priorities of their district. It was very important for me to take our constituents’ priorities into consideration when developing my Budget Memo, and I am grateful to the hundreds of constituents who participated in our Budget Priorities Survey that was open from mid-December through early January. From this survey, we learned that the following are the top 4 priorities of those who took the survey:

- Homelessness Solutions
- Pedestrian and Mobility Safety
- Infrastructure – Streets, Sidewalks and Stormwater
- Crime and Police Response Times

The Mayor’s office will present a budget to the City Council over the upcoming months that will be voted on in June. We look forward to your continued participation in the process as the budget passes through various stages. Visit bit.ly/FY23BudgetMemo for more information on the City’s budget process, including key dates.

In other news, I wanted to express my deep gratitude to Marcela Miranda-Caballero who has served on my team as a policy advisor as well as your community representative for University Heights. She has done a phenomenal job serving the community and keeping me apprised on the issues that are most important to you in University Heights over the last several months. Marcela has recently moved on to a new opportunity, so please join me in expressing our thanks to her for all that she has done for District 3.

Until we are able to fully onboard a new representative to serve your community, please reach out to our Director of Communications & Community Representative Benny Cartwright with any University Heights needs. Benny is well-versed in University Heights issues, being one of your neighbors, and previously serving as the representative for the neighborhood in our first few months in office. Benny can be reached at bcartwright@sandiego.gov. We look forward to introducing you to your new Community Representative soon.

Finally, I am planning a Community Conversation Tour over the next couple of months and look forward to connecting with as many constituents as possible. We have scheduled our Conversation with University Heights and Hillcrest for Thursday, March 10 at 6 pm on Zoom. Please email stephenwhitburn@sandiego.gov to RSVP! I hope to see you there!

— Stephen Whitburn, City Councilmember, District 3

IT’S YOUR BUSINESS

Fibre, the Venue and Salon

Ashley Gill is a 5th generation native of San Diego whose keen sense of style is surpassed only by her business savvy. Barely out of high school, she became an apprentice for a hair stylist, graduating from the program after two years. She discovered she had a passion and talent for hair color and opened her first salon in Bankers Hill. When Ashley became pregnant with her first child, she wanted to move closer to her family in Coronado. She built her own successful salon on the “island” and then an even bigger salon and remained in Coronado for 15 years.

With her new salon, Ashley wanted to create a different concept in the hair salon industry. She envisioned a venue where each stylist has their own business name, logo, and products, but everyone works in a shared space. They each enjoy pride of ownership but still have the benefits of working around other stylists. Ashley may be the owner and creator of the salon, but the other seven stylists who work under the same roof are treated as equals when it comes to making decisions for the entire salon.

When the pandemic hit in early 2020, the hair salon was forced to close. Not working and being deprived of the personal interaction with her clients was emotionally draining on Ashley. Thankfully, her business survived. The sense of isolation Ashley felt while working and being deprived of the personal interaction with her clients was emotionally draining on Ashley. The sense of isolation Ashley felt while working and being deprived of the personal interaction with her clients was emotionally draining on Ashley.

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Ashley Gill in front of her Fibre Salon

About four years ago, while driving down Park Blvd in University Heights, Ashley saw a building available for lease that looked like the perfect location for her to open a new salon. She sold her Coronado salon and worked on transforming the building on Park Blvd, from an apartment to a commercial space. In 2018, she opened “Fibre.” Ashley chose the name based on her work teaching stylists around the world about hair color. Particularly in Europe, each individual hair fiber is treated like a canvas upon which the colorist can create.

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FREE WEBINARS ON RESEARCHING AND DESIGNATING YOUR HISTORIC HOME

Foundation in 1888, University Heights is one of San Diego's oldest neighborhoods. And chances are, you live in an older home with a story to tell. Perhaps you have wondered who built the house or who has lived there before you. You might even be interested in learning your home's historically designated status. But where do you start?

The University Heights Historical Society will help you get started with two free webinars in March about how to research and submit applications to historically designate your home, presented by historical preservation experts Annie Hayes and Doug Mengers.

Starting on Thursday, March 24, from 6 to 7 p.m., Annie Hayes, Senior Historic Resources Specialist with Save Our Heritage Organization, will present Designation: Facts, Process, and Benefits.

Now is an excellent time to think about historically designating your home, not only because of Mills Act property tax benefits, but because of new state tax incentives for rehabilitating of historic structures.

The following Thursday, Doug Mengers, Senior Archaeologist/Historian with PanGIS, Inc., will present Designation: Research and Report Preparation on March 31, from 6 to 7 p.m. While researching and preparing a nomination report for historically designating your home may be a little daunting, Doug will walk you through the process and provide tips for success.

Register for these free webinars at www.uhhsedc.org/events.

— Kevin Harris, UHHS

Give your home the protection it deserves.

Your home is where you make some of your best memories, and that's worth protecting. I'm here to help.

LET'S TALK TODAY.

MET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Ringing the Bell for Bicyclists

Every Wednesday night around 8:00 p.m. when a group of bicyclists goes whistling by Marie and Steve's house on Lincoln Avenue, the couple stand on their porch and enthusiastically wave their cowbells to acknowledge the riders and cheer them on, since the bells are loud enough for the riders to hear as they whiz, encouraging them to keep on pedaling. Marie and Steve have lived in their house on Lincoln for over 30 years, next door to the home that Marie's family lived in since 1893, almost 130 years ago. Marie's grandmother bought the house next door to where Marie lives now for $6,000, and raised her family in it. Marie's mother left home to go to college in LA where she met Marie's dad and raised her family. Eventually, Marie's mother returned to the house on Lincoln to live. When the house next door to her grandmother's came up for sale in 1989, Marie knew she had to have it. She wanted to return to University Heights and raise her children next door to their grandparents. Eventually her grandmother's house was sold. Now Marie and Steve still live next door to their family's former house and have great neighbors.

Later in life, Marie started running marathons and began collecting Rock-n-Roll marathon cowbells. Together, she and Steve were avid bicyclists. About 4 or 5 years ago, Marie noticed that every Wednesday evening around 8:00 p.m., a large group of bicyclists would ride down the hill on Maryland Street, turn right on Lincoln, and cross the Vermont Street bridge into Hillcrest. As a bicycle enthusiast familiar with the tradition, Marie dug out her old Rock-n-Roll marathon cowbells. She and her husband soon started standing on their front porch, ringing the cowbells every Wednesday night as the riders flew by their house. The riders acknowledge the bells by shouting and hollering and popping wheelies.

Despite missing a few Wednesdays during the early stages of the pandemic, Marie estimates there are now sometimes as many as 60 riders going past her house. Ringing the cowbells for the riders is something Marie and Steve look forward to and have even recruited some of their neighbors to join in the fun. It has become a loud and boisterous event where the riders enjoy the cowbells as much as Marie and Steve enjoy ringing them.

So, if you are anywhere in the vicinity of Lincoln and Maryland on a Wednesday night, grab a cowbell and ring it loudly in support of the riders.

— Jane Gilbert

One sustainability practice they've still working on is eliminating plastics, especially plastic bags. They've tried the silicone zipper-lock bags that are meant to replace plastic ones, but the silicone ones can't be cleaned very effectively. The family's solution for now is to avoid bags altogether when possible, and to store food in washable containers. Courtney is also still searching for a better grocery bag solution after learning that the energy and materials used to make reusable cloth bags render them far less sustainable than they might appear to be. But the point is that taking care of our environment isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. The goal is to do as much as we can without wearing ourselves out or driving ourselves crazy (or going into debt). The Summers-Day's family approach, which they've implemented one step at a time, as they were able to, seems like a great model for others to follow. It's about spending the time and resources that they're able to spend in ways that support themselves and the environment we all share.

For those of us still figuring out what more we want to do, "Waste not want not may not be a great start.

— Judith Annickichowsk

SUSTAINABLE UH

Neighborhood Allstars

A lot of folks in our neighborhood are working hard to keep this place (and this planet) we call home as livable as possible. One such family, Courtney Summers-Day, Aaron Day, and their daughter Ava, are great role models for the rest of us who may not have thought about what we should be doing vs. what we feel we have time for and can afford to do.

The Summers-Day home, with electric cars plugged into a solar-power system, and flowers, fruit trees, and vegetable plants adorning the front and side yards, appears expertly planned to work with nature instead of against it. But Courtney and Aaron have taken their environmentally-sustainable steps one at a time, learning as they go.

The family was renting their home before the owners decided to sell, and happily, Courtney and Aaron were in a position to buy. Before escrow closed, Courtney had learned everything she could about the best solar power solution for her house and signed a contract starting the long process of SDGE approvals and eventual installation of 16 solar panels. She and Aaron had one electric car at the time, which, the solar system easily powered. Since acquiring their second electric car, they’ve found that they will need to add to their solar system to cover their new and perhaps future electric needs. Adjustments along the way are all part of the process.

With car emissions a thing of the past, the family’s next project was a garden. Like many in the vicinity of their home, Courtney and Aaron started growing some of their pandemic-related extra time at home to plan and execute a garden.

In their case, it’s a raised bed garden on the side of the house, in an underrutlized stretch of driveway that now supports the family’s tomatoes, herbs, and ornamental plants as they experiment to see what they can grow. Courtney enjoys learning gardening methods from Carlsbad-based Epic Gardening’s YouTube channel, among other online sources of information. And she has learned that metal raised garden bed frames that sit flush with the ground are both more economical and more effective than the wooden raised beds on legs that she started with. She finds seeds and shade cloth online and has found that the most expensive part of gardening is purchasing soil for the raised beds.

As part of the evolving process of developing her garden, Courtney installed a simple-to-use drip watering system to keep her plants alive. She and Aaron have also experimented with various methods for keeping their veggies safe from the marauding squirrels, skunks, possums, and other critters many in Uh are familiar with. They’ve found that a portable dog-gate system wrapped around garden beds helps. And chicken wire blocking access to plants is absolutely necessary. Because she knew that methane from decomposing plant material and food waste sent to the dump makes up a huge part of California’s greenhouse gas emissions, Courtney was also very enthusiastic to try composting as part of her foray into gardening. She likes the tumble-style composter she acquired because it’s critter-proof, but she says it’s been a challenge to get the balance between “greens” and “browns” just right, so she’ll be working on the process to work out the balance. And that’s okay! Learning, experimentation, trial and error are all part of the process.

Courtney says she’s naturally frugal—wasting resources seems simply wrong. She donates to charities any items she can no longer use, and she shops at thrift stores for clothes and other goods. One of the family’s most recent additions to their environmentally-sustainable lifestyle is composting, and by making sure to factor leftovers into their meal plans. They’ve thrown out much less spoiled food since making these changes to the way they approach shopping for food and cooking meals.

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Basilico La Pizzeria: A Labor of Love

Giancarlo & Mario, two bright and energetic men from southern Italy, joined forces with Vicenzo, a stalwart in the local Italian restaurant scene, to open up Basilico La Pizzeria on Park Blvd. in November of 2021. What is now Basilico La Pizzeria used to be Bruno’s Pizzeria. It was difficult to open a new business during the pandemic, but the partners were committed to their vision and completely revamped the restaurant. Basilico La Pizzeria now offers a casual dining experience, authentic southern Italian food, and neighborly company.

When you walk through Basilico’s door, you can’t miss “Vince” the wood-fired pizza oven sitting smack in the middle of the restaurant. This impressive oven was built in Italy, shipped to San Diego, and fondly named after the restaurant’s 3rd partner, Vicenzo.

Vittorio, the head chef at Basilico, makes a wide variety of homemade pizzas and has daily specials (with vegetarian and vegan options). But there is more on the menu than just pizza; Vittorio cooks up traditional southern Italian dishes such as gnocchi, ravioli, pasta, and lasagna. Everything is homemade on site with ingredients imported from Italy, including the tomato sauce, mozzarella, flour, and extra-virgin olive oil. The desserts are all homemade too and equally delicious.

All the food at Basilico is authentically southern Italian, as is everyone who works at the restaurant. Like “Vince” the oven, they are all from Italy, and they treat each other as family. The waiters, the chefs, and even Giancarlo and Mario (on-site managers) will sit with you at your table and talk about anything and everything, from food, to visiting Italy, to family, to soccer…it is a warm and friendly place.

Recognizing the need for more outdoor dining than just the tables out front on the sidewalk, Giancarlo and Mario envisioned a “secret garden” in the back of the restaurant. They converted the big empty lot stretching all the way to the alley behind the restaurant into a large dining space with plenty of tables, heaters, and outdoor lighting. In the middle of the new patio stands an island-type bar that opens up on all four sides. The back patio has a very fun vibe and can be rented out for parties.

You can order take-out through one of the standard delivery apps, but it is a much more fulfilling dining experience to come into the restaurant. Once you sit down, you will be treated like family as your server recommends the best food to suit your tastes and will happily talk with you about the neighborhood, your family, or their family back home in Italy.

— Jane Gilbert

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