THE UNSHeltered NEED A HOME

Oscar (as we’re identifying him, for his privacy) is a 60-something-year-old man who lives on the streets here in University Heights. He is a native San Diegan who grew up in the Clairemont area.

About 8 years ago, under the weight of a real estate fraud, Oscar lost his home. Since then, he has managed to survive by working various odd jobs but mostly through the generosity of others. Yet despite his odd jobs and support from others, he is unable to afford a place to live.

Oscar has tried many times to find a small apartment to live in, only to be repeatedly pushed out of the market by someone who is able to pay more.

He is intelligent, educated, and articulate. His background is in health and physical education. Oscar is neither mentally ill nor a drug addict. He does not commit crimes despite living on the streets. In fact, you may see Oscar cleaning up trash along Park Boulevard – a point of pride that he’s giving back to the community in some small way.

Oscar has stayed in various shelters throughout the county but has found them woefully lacking in what he, and others similarly situated, need. The traditional model for homeless shelters was developed in the 1980s. It is dorm-style living, with shared bathrooms and showers. The meals, while relatively inexpensive to provide, are high in simple carbohydrates and low on fruits and vegetables. There is a curfew that does not allow for exceptions if someone works or goes to school at night. Moreover, these shelters are only a temporary fix. The maximum stay is 90 days. In many cases, there is no guarantee that if you get a bed on one night it will be available the following day. Oscar told us, “If I have to be out at 7:30am, how do I try to land a job that will get me to the point I can make rent, if I don’t know where I’m going to have to sleep that night? A lot of times I end up having to find a nook or doorway.”

Oscar needs the things that will make it possible for him to get training and a job. As the world has moved to remote work, he and others like him need laptops, phones, and affordable access to the internet. The same things also are necessary for him to continue taking community college courses and searching for a job. Oscar and other unserved/sheltered people need realistic vocational training and assistance finding jobs commensurate with their experience and training. More than anything, he needs a place to call his own.

Oscar believes local government can solve a good portion of the homeless crisis. “If they would just spend the huge amount of money they are spending smarter – where it is needed, on the people who need it, and not on more programs and overhead – we would see a reduction in homelessness.”

“A shelter is not a home,” he says. “But if the city or county would actually build affordable housing, it would help me and many others get off the street. Whether converting older apartment buildings into apartments for homeless people instead of affordable housing, it would help me and many others get off the street. Whether converting older apartment buildings into apartments for homeless people instead of razing them to the ground or remodeling them into places that cost thousands of dollars,” Oscar said.

The San Diego Housing Federation shared at the February UHCA monthly meeting that rents in San Diego County need to earn $36.62 per hour – 2.8 times the City of San Diego minimum wage — to afford the average monthly asking rent of $1,904. More than 83% of low-income households are paying more than half of their income on housing, when they can find it. The production of low-income housing has been woefully inadequate, with over 142,950 San Diego residents without access to an affordable home.

Making the leap from homeless to being able to afford rent, plus all of the other expenses like deposits, utilities, clothes to go to work, is not insignificant. Additional help and supportive services are needed to make that first step off the streets possible.

continued on page 2

Money Alone Is Not the Solution

Deborah Morrison and Katharine Cline have a passion for their neighborhood and compassion for their neighbors without homes. These two women are committed to making a difference in our community by figuring out a way to get our unserved neighbors off the streets and into real homes, not warehouses.

Deborah and Katharine met each other by chance at a local Italian restaurant during the pandemic. After talking to one another as the months of the pandemic dragged on, they realized they both had a lot of similar viewpoints, particularly, regarding the homeless situation in our neighborhood. They both felt that while millions of dollars were being funneled to various homeless projects, the problem was getting worse. They vowed to stop complaining about the situation and instead, work toward finding solutions to the problem.

Deborah has owned her home near the Vermont Street bridge in University Heights for six years. She is retired and spends her time volunteering for local public service organizations. After a fire accidentally broke out in the homeless encampment under the

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This issue of UHCA News has a first-person interview with one of our homeless neighbors. He’s a kind, smart, conversational guy who fell on hard times and is “stuck.” I’ve seen people walk past him without even seeing him, but as I began conversing with him, I learned more about his story. And about him as a fellow human. Imagine you’ve gone through your last dollar and have to move out of your home, you’ve lost your job, don’t have family to turn to for help, can’t afford your car anymore, and you are at rock bottom with only what you can carry to call your own. The hill to climb to get back to a productive life is more like a mountain: apartment deposit, food, medicine, clothing, toiletries, transportation, utilities, the list goes on. And if you can only find a part time job, add healthcare as another significant expense. Getting “off the street” has a significant cost, one that most folks in this situation cannot afford. Oscar is one of those people that could get his life back on track, working and a productive paying member of society, with some help getting him into an affordable home. There are many other homeless people who face more daunting problems from mental and other health issues, PTSD, addiction issues, family/relationship trouble, and the list goes on. They will take many more resources, care, and time. We need to focus our efforts on the “quick” lines like helping Oscar, which will free up resources that can then focus on the more intensive cases. And, we also have to acknowledge that some people are not willing to accept help and will require other solutions. Hopefully some of the changes being discussed in Sacramento, like Care Courts, create solutions for some of the truly desperate cases that we see in our neighborhood.

In this issue we also interview two amazing neighbors who have made the decision to tackle this monumental problem with grass-roots gusto. They are trying to create a core group of passionate and committed neighbors and business owners to educate themselves, identify solutions, and then engage with local organizations and elected officials to put those solutions to work. But perhaps more importantly, they have gotten to know their homeless neighbors as fellow human beings.

At the recent Cookies with the Cops event in March, we talked with SDPD and PATH, who are supposed to be working in partnership to help address the number of homeless in our neighborhood. But there still isn’t a PATH outreach worker assigned to UH. What can we do as a community? We can start by treating our homeless neighbors with dignity, compassion, and respect. We can also demand that our elected officials and government show results after years of promises. We must hold them accountable for the programs and contracts they sign, development deals they approve—ultimately with our votes. We can also donate what we can, where it makes the most difference. In the meantime, we need to communicate problems to PATH (619-815-6000) and SDPD (619-531-9999), and with each other via UHCA’s ZoneWatch. We may not solve the enormous problem at once, but we may help individuals one at a time, which is what will eventually be the solution.

The unsheathed need a home that is more than an industrial shell to house them, and they need it to be affordable compared to their income. When they earn income, they become economic contributors to the community, so the housing they need and deserve ultimately supports the entire community.

The City’s Community Action Plan on Homelessness established a goal in 2020 of reducing homelessness by 50% by 2023. The San Diego Housing Commission contracted with PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) starting in November 2020 to implement a Coordinated Street Outreach Program to work towards that goal with a $1.45 million contract through June 2021. That contract was expanded and expanded to $2.5 million for the following year starting July 2021. Oscar has talked with people from PATH. “They have come over to me while I’m on the bench, and ask what I need. I tell them I need an apartment so I can get back on my feet and work. They tell me to go to Father Joe’s.”

This is not how this problem is going to get solved, and in Oscar’s case, PATH is not offering a hand-up to help support him into a permanent housing situation. We can’t help a healthy, non-drug using, intelligent, and capable person like Oscar, then what are our tax dollars actually doing for our homeless neighbors and our neighbors that are seeing increasing numbers of homeless on the streets?

Oscar is a kind gentleman who rescued a feral cat 5 years ago and named him Winston. Oscar trained Winston to be a friendly neighborhood cat. Like Oscar, the cat is a survivor.

—Jane Gilbert & Marc Johnson

Volunteer Your Time on a UHCA Committee!

- Beautification & Planning Keep UH beautiful.
- Blockwalker Help deliver UHCA 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 News.
- Program & Events Plan and oversee the various events and general meetings.

A portion of your membership dues or the event fees allowed by law. For more info, email membership@uhsd.org

JOIN, RENEW, DONATE, OR VOLUNTEER ONLINE AT UHSO.org

UHCA NEWS

Editorial Team Susan Holts, Nan McGraw, Judith Annichiarico, Thalia Diessen, Marc Johnson (Publisher)

Staff Columnists Patty Howland
Photo and Graphics Paul Harris, Marc Johnson, Patty Howland, Jane Gilbert, Thalia Diessen
Advertising Director Susan Holts at UHSO.org

Published 10 times per year by the University Heights Community Association. We welcome articles, letters, and announcements about issues and events relating to University Heights. The deadline for submission is the first of the month. Please see www.uhsd.org/submissions for details.

We care for our neighbors and are trying to create a core group of passionate and committed neighbors and business owners to educate themselves, identify solutions, and then engage with local organizations and elected officials to put those solutions to work. But perhaps more importantly, they have gotten to know their homeless neighbors as fellow human beings.
April 7 UHCA Community Meeting Summary

The April 7 UHCA Community Meeting was held at 6:45pm via zoom. The full meeting is available for replay at www.uhsd.org/attend-a-meeting.

Crime Watch

There was a home invasion in the 4500 block of Arizona Street. Residents were zip-tied and pistol whipped. Summer’s Liquor store on Park Boulevard was robbed at gun point. The medical building near Trolley Barn Park wants a blinking light crosswalks installed to navigate Adams Avenue. Homelessness and what to do about it remains a concern.

Announcements

UHCA President Marc Johnson opened the meeting – Happy Earth Day Month everyone! As events begin again, life is returning to a more normal pulse. The motto for April is “Renewal.” We continue to welcome volunteers who step forward. Thank you as well to our business members for their ongoing support.

 Beautification

Sol Schummer reports that a clean-up along Park Boulevard from Meade to Adams occurred. Graffiti was cleaned up and stickers were removed. It was a great turn-out.

Events

Stu McGraw reports that Cookies with the Cops had a record number of residents show up. Representatives from the SDPD, PATH, and the Park Rangers were in attendance. Big Front Door supplied the treats. The 25th Anniversary of the UH Sign Celebration will be held on April 30. Tickets were offered to UH residents and members first. The UH Community Yard Sale is coming on June 4.

Community News

The survey regarding the Comfort Station/Restrooms proposed for Trolley Barn Park has had 218 responses so far. Over 70% are against it. UHCA asks that you sign-up to help protect our community voices on upcoming municipal matters. Concerts in the Park are returning July 8. UHCA is a sponsor. Kristin Harms reports that the webinar on historically designating your home went well. A 56-page package is available. More are returning July 8. UHCA is a sponsor. Kristin Harms reports that the webinar on historically designating your home went well. A 56-page package is available. More are returning July 8. UHCA is a sponsor.

Library Updates

Rachel Esquiverra reports that Kim Schmidt, former UH Branch Manager, passed away. National Library Week is going well. Book sales have returned. Nominate a book for One San Diego.

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Wildflowers – native plants that grow from seeds or bulbs and flower, seed, and die (or die back) in one year—are getting harder to find. A century ago, wildflower fields could still be found near Pasadena; by the 1940s, the Inland Empire was the place, and since the 1970s, it takes a trip to the desert. So, seeing wildflowers in our own neighborhood is a treat. Let’s take a tour to see these remnants of California’s past. Look, don’t pick, so others can enjoy them and the flowers can reproduce.

Start at the native garden at 4490 Cleveland Ave. Look for two members of the Daisy Family. The smaller yellow flowers are Goldfields (Lasthenia sp.), which, as its name implies, can carpet the ground. If you detect a sweet aroma, imagine how an acre of these would smell! The larger daisy in Tidy Tips (Layia platyglossa) – note the white tips at the end of the petals (“ray flowers”). I often found these two growing in open patches when surveying for the endangered Quino Cheekerspot Butterfly, which needs these nectar sources to survive.

Two native bulbs are growing in the yard. Wild Onion (Allium haemochiton) has bulbs of tiny white flowers and erect linear leaves (they do taste like onion). Blue-Eyed Grass has purple flowers with a yellow center. It’s not actually a grass, but a member of the Iris family. Finally, look for the deep blue flowers of Grand Phacelia (Phacelia grandiflora), the showiest of this diverse genus of small shrubs and wildflowers.

On the way to The Point you’ll pass a bed of California Poppies (Eschscholtzia californica), the ubiquitous (but delightful) exception to the rule about wildflowers being scarce. As you walk through the Open Space Park, you’ll see lots of yellow and orange flowers—these are all invasive weeds, and why wildflowers are in decline. Rancher’s Fireweed (Amsinckia menziesii) in the exception—it is indeed weedy, but it’s a native. It’s related to Phacelias; both have flowers that emerge as a “fiddlehead” unrolls. Look for it around the Olive in the center.

End your tour by stepping into the wild just beyond the fence on the trail. Take the path left and continue about 20 feet. To your left, look for the delicate pink blossom on the trail left and continue about 20 feet. To your right, you may keep it that way. To your right, you may see Wild Hyacinth (Dichelostemma capitatum) flowers at the tip of long, narrow stems—another native bulb.

There’s a time lag from my writing this to you reading it, so I encourage you to check these out soon. Since before the pandemic, I’ve wanted to show off the native plants in our neighborhood. With Covid apparently in retreat, I’ll finally be leading a walking tour at 10 a.m., Saturday, May 14. It starts and ends at American Market (Cleveland & Meade), covers less than one mile, and should take about an hour. If you’ve read this far, you’re invited!

— Dave Flitner

Wildflowers

Tidy Tips (Layia platyglossa)

Grand Phacelia (Phacelia grandiflora)

California Poppies (Eschscholtzia californica)

Rancher’s Fireweed (Amsinckia menziesii)

MAY PLUME

This month UHCA thanks and honors Andy Lange, Robert Dowell, Dawn Saedi, and John Ross. For more than five years, these four individuals have volunteered countless hours collecting thousands of pounds of trash during their weekly cleanups of Washington Street. Together, they beautify our community from Campus Avenue to 8th Avenue, including the medians, both sides of the I-15 onramp off Washington down to the metered ramp signal, the Washington Avenue exit off I-15, and the small canyon the exit wraps around. Every week they also clean up and around numerous encampments, perform weed abatement along Washington Street, trim trees and bushes to help deter new encampments, and return shopping carts left abandoned. And they clean up leaves and trash along the entire length of Vermont Street Bridge. Andy, Robert, Dawn, and John, we thank you for all your hard work and dedication to keeping our neighborhood a safe and pleasant place to live.

Primarily sponsored by the University Heights Community Development Corp. with the financial support of many CoSponsors and community donors, and our UH Recreation Council, the 24th Annual Free Concert Series will be four fun-filled Friday evenings for families, individuals, and visitors. Contact the UHDC office at 619-267-3166 or email uhdcmetereos.net for more information.

— Erin Iann, University Heights Community Development Corporation
Miraculous Monarchs

When the days get longer and the weather gets warmer, Monarch butterflies are a welcome harbinger of Springtime. Their bold orange wings, veined in black with white polka dotted edges, are instantly recognizable.

Last year while walking my dog along Madison Avenue, I spied a tiny caterpillar scooting across the sidewalk towards the street. Concerned for the caterpillar’s well-being, I knew my neighbors Jill Kruse and Renee Gregorio would know exactly what to do since they have an official “Monarch Waystation.” They carefully ferried the tiny caterpillar to a safe place in their yard where it eventually metamorphosed into a Monarch butterfly! It turns out that wasn’t the only caterpillar they hatched. Jill and Renee released an astonishing 116 butterflies that were under their care.

I began to notice other gardens in the neighborhood with similar landscaping and learned of more Monarch butterfly benefactors, such as Mark and Katherine (she goes by Kitty) Betel on Louisiana street. Their interest in creating a habitat started around the beginning of the pandemic when they had more time at home to devote to the garden. Kitty calls it a silver lining experience because they became truly enamored with Monarchs and felt a responsibility to help them flourish.

Here are some suggestions if you’d like to create a Monarch waystation of your very own:

• You don’t need a big garden; milkweed plants don’t have to take up a lot of room. Even a few plants can help.  
• Plant native milkweed only. It’s easy to create a Monarch waystation of your own.  
• If you have tropical milkweed, be sure to cut it back in the fall and winter. (Many gardeners are unaware that the tropical variety may negatively affect breeding and migration patterns and is prone to parasitides that kill caterpillars and adult Monarchs)  
• You can spot Monarch eggs by carefully looking at the underside of milkweed leaves. If you’re interested in planting a waystation or already have one, you can visit monarchwatch.org for information and to have your habitat certified as an official Monarch Waystation. According to the site, as of March, 2022, there are 37,716 Monarch Waystation habitats registered across the country. Ten of them are located right here in 92116! Whether you’re certified or not, just providing a place for nature to thrive is a gift of its own. For more ways to help Monarchs, two good resources are xerces.org (invertebrate conservation) and edf.org (the Environmental Defense Fund).

Fascinating Facts about Monarchs:

• It’s said that these regal winged insects got their common name in honor of another kind of monarch, the 17th century king of England, Scotland, and Wales, William the III, also known as the Prince of Orange. 
• The color orange is a warning sign to predators to beware that they may be eating something poisonous.
• The easiest way to tell a female monarch from a male is by looking for two small dark spots on the hind wings; only males have the spots.
• Monarch butterflies can flap their wings up to 12 times a second. 
• Monarchs are considered to be the only butterfly that truly migrates. 
• Their incredibly accurate internal “GPS” guides them to their migration destination over thousands of miles, often to a specific tree where previous generations spent the winter.

—Thalia Driessen

For your Monarch Waystation & More: Eden

Spring’s arrival inspires new life, growth, and beauty. As a plant nursery and garden center, Eden San Diego is invested in stewarding the season through their selection of interior and exterior plants, seeds, and gardening supplies. They are a one-stop shop that meets the gardening needs of University Heights without its residents having to leave their neighborhood.

Native plants are a key element in creating a sustainable ecosystem as they tend to need less supplemental water, less fertilizer, and less maintenance due to their unique suitability to their environment. They serve as an important food source for local pollinators and attract birds and other wildlife, offering the double benefit of biodiversity and beauty.

Imagine a garden of milkweed, sage, and poppies infused with the sound of bees, the energy of hummingbirds, and the color of Monarch butterflies. California native plants are a sustainable way to make this image a reality in your outdoor space. Increased interest in sustainability has led many of us to consider how we can become better stewards of the natural environment. Planting natives is a practical step in that direction and a fun way to leverage eco-consciousness into action.

Eden, located at 4636 Park Blvd, is open Thursday through Monday from 11 am to 5 pm and offers a variety of houseplants, pots, cacti, succulents, and gift shop items.

—Thalia Driessen

UHCA News  University Heights Community Association  May 2022
# May 2022

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| **1** | **Hillcrest Farmers Market** 9 am - 2 pm  
**May Day**  
June News Articles Due |
| **2** | **SDUSD Board Meeting** 5 pm, [sdusd.org](http://sdusd.org)  
**Uptown Planners Meeting** 6 pm, [uptownplanners.ud.org](http://uptownplanners.ud.org) |
| **3** | **4** | **UHDC**  
6pm, [uhdc.org](http://uhdc.org)  
**UHCA Beautification Meeting** 6pm |
| **5** | **UH Park & Rec Meeting** [twitter handle](https://twitter.com)  
**UHCA Meeting** [twitter handle](https://twitter.com)  
**Cinco de Mayo** [twitter handle](https://twitter.com) |
| **6** | **THANKS FOR 25 YEARS!**  
Dan & Bernie |
| **7** | **NATIONAL NURSES DAY** |
| **8** | **Friends of the UH Library Meeting** 6pm  
**Hillcrest Farmers Market** 9 am - 2 pm  
**Mother’s Day** |
| **9** | **SDUSD Board Meeting** 5 pm, [sdusd.org](http://sdusd.org)  
**Hillcrest Town Council** 6:30 pm |
| **10** | **North Park Planning Committee Meeting** 6:30 pm, [northparkplanning.org](http://northparkplanning.org) |
| **11** | **International Museum Day** |
| **12** | **Bike to Work Day**  
**Endangered Species Day** |
| **13** | **World Migratory Bird Day**  
**Empire Builder: John Spreckles webinar** 12pm, [uhhs-uhcdc.org](http://uhhs-uhcdc.org) |
| **14** | **Armed Forces Day**  
**Historic Streetcars of University Heights webinar** 12pm, [uhhs-uhcdc.org](http://uhhs-uhcdc.org) |
| **15** | **Hillcrest Farmers Market** 9 am - 2 pm  
**Total Lunar Eclipse** |
| **16** |  
| **17** | **June UHCA News Out** |
| **18** | **UH Park & Rec Meeting** [twitter handle]  
**UHCA Meeting** [twitter handle]  
**Cinco de Mayo** [twitter handle] |
| **19** |  
| **20** |  
| **21** |  |
| **22** | **Hillcrest Farmers Market** 9 am - 2 pm  
**World Turtle Day** |
| **23** | **SDUSD Board Meeting** 5 pm, [sdusd.org](http://sdusd.org)  
**June UHCA News Out** |
| **24** |  
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| **28** | **National Barbecue Month** |
| **29** | **May Day**  
June News Articles Due |
| **30** | **Memorial Day**  
**National Pet Month** |
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www.uhsd.org

**Twiggs University Heights**  
4590 Park Blvd • 619.293.0616  
**Twiggs Adams Avenue**  
2804 Adams Ave • 619.295.4077

THANKS FOR 25 YEARS!  
Dan & Bernie
**BIRNEY BUZZ**

**Steps Closer for the Birney Community**

Pre-pandemic, our annual jog-a-thon fundraiser in March, known as the “Run for the Green,” was a festive celebration for the Birney community to come together and cheer on our 500+ students running all at the same time. With bubbles, snacks, music, and cheerleaders, it was always a popular and successful fundraiser. But in 2020, as mentioned in last month’s “Birney Buzz,” it had to be a remote event for the students to commit to do on their own, and in 2021, the event was moved to late in the school year. The kids who opted to return to school ran with just their class. It was what we needed to do to be safe, but much harder to get everyone excited about. Since we rely on this event to fund a third of the annual costs to support the International Baccalaureate Program including Arts, Spanish, Library, and Garden, the Friends of Alice Birney Elementary board was nervous about meeting the goal and had started coming up with back-up plans for other fundraisers.

This year, most of the classes ran with one other class from their grade level, and parents were invited to come cheer on their students, the first time in two years. Parents and other family members were able to watch the short ceremony where Coach Lord handed out medals to runners. Parents and other family members were able to watch the short ceremony where Coach Lord handed out medals to runners who met their grade goal. Not quite pre-pandemic, but definitely so much better than we were over the past two years. Equally important, the Birney community, including their friends and families, delivered as $8k above our goal!

Thomas S., the student who raised the most money for the school, was awarded the honor of being Principal for the Day. Thomas told me, “This year I helped raise [Run for the Green] money by reaching out to family and friends, and by selling flowers, cookies, and lemonade. I believe it is important to raise money for our amazing school because it supports our Spanish, PE, Art, and Garden programs, giving students of all grades fun ways to learn about different topics. Another part of Birney that makes it unique is the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, which provides students with a global outlook on many different subjects that you would not typically find in other schools.”

“But the most important reason why Birney is great is the kind teachers and staff who work hard at the school to help students excel in their learning.”

This is why so many students worked hard to raise money for Birney. Since this is my last year at Birney, I am glad I could contribute my fullest in order to be safe, but much hard to raise money for Birney. Since this is my last year at Birney, I am glad I could contribute my fullest in order to be safe, but much

In accordance with district guidelines, Birney recently removed mask requirements indoors. However, teachers, students, and their parents are encouraged to do what they feel comfortable with, which will be different for everyone.

The Friends of Alice Birney Elementary will be hosting our first outdoor movie fundraiser in May, and our Birney farmstand occurs on the 2nd or 3rd Saturday of the month at Twigen on Park. We welcome new 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 friendsalicebirney.org for more information on all our events!

— Voysha Hallman, Proud Birney Parent and Friends of Alice Birney Elementary (FOABE) Board Member

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**ROO NEWS**

**Roosevelt International Middle School Presents “High School Musical Jr.”**

With loosened COVID restrictions, theater kids are starting to have more opportunities to tread the boards this spring, and the Roosevelt Theater Company has been hard at work preparing for opening day of “High School Musical Jr.”

A sneak preview of the show for Roosevelt families and families of elementary schools that feed into Roosevelt will be held on May 10 as part of the school’s International Baccalaureate (IB) Fest, followed by a performance during the school day on May 13, and finally a friends-and-family production on May 14. All performances will be in-person at the Roosevelt Auditorium.

Students rehearsing High School Musical Jr.

The production is an adaptation of the musical based-on-a-TV movie about a musical (don’t think about it too much), and it will star 22 students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. These young performers have been rehearsing as part of the After School Enrichment program, the free after school clubs provided by the school foundation, Friends of Roosevelt.

In addition to starring, students create and build the sets and comprise the stage and tech crew. Pauline Treviño, a parent volunteer, directs the show, supervises the kids, and handles the logistics.

I asked Ms. Treviño about the history of staging this show, and she explained that it went all the way back to spring of 2020, when the student body responded to a survey asking to rank a selection of shows that were available to perform. “High School Musical, Jr.” was the winner. The club had gotten through an audition workshop, the auditions themselves, and two weeks of rehearsals before COVID-19 put the kibosh on their plans.

While many of the original cast members have moved on to high school (and presumably high school musicals), a handful of veterans of the ill-fated 2020 version will be returning this year in a triumphant culmination of their middle school years and, we hope, a farewell to a bleak era for kids and adults alike.

For more information about all things Roosevelt, visit the Friends of Roosevelt (aka RooFriends) website at www.roofriends.org.

— Andy Hinds

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MEET ODI THE COYOTE

Have you met the library’s fabulous mascot, Odi the Coyote? Odi’s name derives from the library’s mission statement to be THE place for Opportunity, Discovery, and Inspiration. Some of you may have seen on our Facebook page many of our youngest readers ages 0-5 years old who have signed up to get their very first library card, as well as a copy of the library’s original published book, “Odi’s Library Day.” We have copies of the book for check out, as well, so come take a look. No matter your age, you can even get a library card with one of our newest designs featuring ODI or the beautiful Torrey Pines coastline!

With your new library card, you can experience Discover & Go, a program provided by the library that offers family passes to several of San Diego’s biggest attractions, including the New Children’s Museum, the Museum of Us, The San Diego Museum of Art, the Children’s Discovery Museum, and Skaterworld! Passes can be reserved online, in-person, or over the phone with a valid library card. Reserve passes today and discover what San Diego has to offer!

Have you seen us around the neighborhood? We’ve been going out into the community! Youth Services Librarian, Helena Idels, joined a recent UH cleanup, and ace Library Assistant III, Jeff Garthaus, attended Cookies with the Cops. I recently “tabbed” at the Hillcrest Farmer’s Market with my good friend from the Mission Hills Branch. We also had a blast with our Friends of the UH Library at the UH sign anniversary! To join the UH Friends and help support and advocate for your local library, visit www.friendsofuhlibrary.org.

All City Libraries are CLOSED Monday, May 30, for Memorial Day. —Rachel L. Johnson, Program Manager, University Heights Library, 619-492-4912, rjohnson@sdg.gov

FRIENDS OF THE UH LIBRARY

Book Sales and Bookshelves

By now you probably know that the Friends of San Diego Public Library book sale is back. Although that book sale is (testorarily) held only once per month, you can still get good reads at great prices all month long at our very own UH branch book sale shelves. In fact, we have just expanded from one to two bookshelves to keep up with demand! Check out the greenway Book sale bookshelves and choose from a variety of books and magazines. We are always getting in new items, so stop by regularly. Donations from the book sale go to support the UH library.

Membership

We are able to provide financial support to our branch because of membership dues and donations. Please join us in helping our library continue to be a great resource for our community by joining or renewing your membership to the Friends of the University Heights Library. You can download a membership form from our website or pick up a form at the branch. The Friends of the San Diego Public Library is a California Tax Exempt Non-Profit Corporation under IRS 501(c) 3. Your tax-deductible membership dues and donations may be matched by the City of San Diego.

For more info, check out our website www.friendedudlibrary.org or contact us at info@friendsofuhlibrary.org. You can also subscribe to our newsletter for all the latest info.

Thank you for supporting our library. —Isabel Schlechter, President Friends of the University Heights Library

Donations to The Friends of San Diego Public Library are tax deductible to the full extent of the law and are used to support programs and purchase books, materials, and equipment.

UHHS NEWS

Celebrate National Preservation Month!

In honor of National Preservation Month, the University Heights Historical Society will host two free webinars about key people and innovations that significantly influenced the early development of University Heights and all of San Diego. The UHHS is also offering its new Guide to Researching and Historically Designating Your Property for owners interested in historically designating their properties

Free Webinar on May 14: Empire Builder: John D. Spreckels and the Making of San Diego

Join us as we look behind the scenes through a colorful slide show at the pioneering legacy of John D. Spreckels with historian Dr. Sandra Bonura. She authored the newly released biography, Empire Builder: John D. Spreckels and the Making of San Diego. After “discovering” the bankruptcy of the village of San Diego, in 1887, he left everything behind to follow his heart. His moves were so decisive and sweeping that within a few years, he virtually controlled the majority of all San Diego’s industry. He was at the forefront of innovation, and at the top of the 20th century, one in fifteen San Diegans worked for a Spreckels-owned company. After this presentation, you will wonder why this empire builder is all but forgotten today in San Diego.

To register, please visit www uhhs uhcdc org/events.

New! Guide to Researching and Historically Designating Your Property

The University Heights Historical Society is pleased to offer our new Guide to Researching and Historically Designating Your Property, available for download from our online store for $10. This digital guide consists of a one-hour recorded webinar and the 63-page slide deck presented on March 31 by Senior Archaeologist/Historian Doug Mengers with PunicGIS. Mr. Mengers walks through the process of researching the history of your property, preparing a report to nominate it locally for historic designation, and completing a Mills Act application to reduce property taxes on designated properties. For more information or to purchase, please visit www.uhhs uhcdc org/ online store.

—Kristin Harris, University Heights Historical Society
25 Electrifying Years!
We’re Having a Block Party
Celebrate UH Sign’s 25th Anniversary on April 30th

Nothing symbolizes our community’s sense of spirit and bond as much as the neon “University Heights” sign in the 4600 block of Park Blvd. Come out and join your friends and neighbors on Saturday, April 30th from 5-8 pm to celebrate the UH sign’s 25th anniversary.

Many of our neighborhood businesses will offer complimentary samples of food and drinks to anyone wearing anniversary wristbands, which are available at www.uhsd.org/Sign25 or a limited number may be available at the event.

Saturday April 30 - 5-8pm
Live Music • Food & Drink Samples
Wristbands available at www.uhsd.org/Sign25

Scan with your phone’s camera to reserve your wristband!

Thanks to our awesome local businesses for participating!

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University Heights Has Spoken

72% against adding restrooms to Old Trolley Barn Park
Clear message to City: find an alternative

As reported in the March UHCA News, the City again started exploring adding a restroom in Old Trolley Barn Park. Councilmember Whitburn has developed an UHCA leadership and UHCA agreed to produce an online survey to provide a clear “Voice of UHP” response to this idea.

The UH Park, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Group (UHPRASAG) had an open forum in September 2019 where dozens of neighbors came out in strong opposition, and the group formally voted to oppose this idea.

As of press time, there were 250 responses to the survey, representing 359 park users, and the results are clear. The majority of responders were against the proposed restroom distance from the park.

Of the 250 respondents, nearly 70% visit the park at least once a week, nearly 80% walk to the park, 98% feel safe at the park, and 84% are opposed to adding public restrooms.

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Many respondents to our survey provided well thought-out points, and UHCA News is happy to feature select comments here (to protect privacy, we are not including names unless explicitly agreed to). To ensure that comments are presented fairly, comments for and against have been included in approximately the same percentage as the full survey results including all comments are at www.uhda.org/news/reseachsurvey2023 with a link to the original article.

Voices in Favor

“This shouldn’t even be a debate, support the installation of public restrooms in CTU and UHCS has already prepared the funding for its maintenance. Furthermore, take initiative in maintaining it the same way we show support to the other amenities of our unique and diverse neighborhood. Finally, make a contribution to the efforts to eradicate homelessness in our community instead of punishing everyone for the sake of bigotry.” – J. Jenkins

“It is difficult to spend a significant amount of time in the park without a restroom. I used to work out with my personal trainer at this park but finding ourselves unable to use the restroom for 2 hours was a challenge. Try having a problem? I am a UH resident, but live near the Vermont St. Bridge. My walk to and from the park is about 20-25 minutes. It makes no sense to have restrooms here, and the people who live near the park who are opposed should think of this as a neighborhood issue but don’t live so close.”

“If my son has to use the restroom we have to go run and search for a place or leave. My pregnant mana friends also have no place to go. We love this park and would go more often if there were restrooms. This is such a large community of regulars at the park, I don’t foresee it being taken over by transients.”

“It seems a lot of the rhetoric around not installing a bathroom at Trolley Barn is anti-homeless and that’s very shameful. I’m embarrassed that my neighborhood in turn, will give all people access to have the human right of a safe, clean place to take care of a necessary bodily function. This year, the City has worked to strengthen the stigma around homeless individuals who need our support now more than ever.

“Hi there! I would love to have restrooms at Trolley Barn. As a woman, I have a child, I will be exposed to a number of undesirable things. This idea has been revisited on multiple occasions throughout the years and each time it gets shot down because the bathrooms will ultimately be unsafe, unsanitary and nearly impossible to maintain unless they are cleaned multiple times a day and locked at night. Let’s spend our funds on more meaningful projects like expanding our existing library, planting trees, improving existing parks and adding more off-leash dog space including a dog park.” – Jennifer Bishop

Voices Against

“Any positives of adding prohibitively expensive public restrooms are far outweighed by the negatives and probable unintended consequences.” – Jim Z.

“If we could have accountability for the cleanliness of the park I would be more willing to see a restroom put in, but I don’t trust that to happen to the level I want to see given what I have seen at other parks in the area.

Nobody, who is using the park with their family, would ever go into, or let their children go into a public park bathroom. They are unpredictable and there is a high likelihood that you, or your child, will be exposed to a number of undesirable things. This year, the City has worked to strengthen the stigma around homeless individuals who need our support now more than ever.

“I go to this park so often but I always wished there’s a restroom so I can stay longer, my house is 15min walking distance so I do not want to be there. Plus there’s a lot of kids that goes there daily and kids can’t hold it for so long as adults. I think every time every new politician is elected representing our community. We all know that this park is already planned & built without restrooms after neighborhood input at meetings, yet here we go again! We have visited every community park with restrooms in a 3-mile radius of TBP & they are disgusting and not maintained, not to mention the transient drug dealers that conduct their business inside & around. If I were to bring a child, I certainly would not take them inside a new restroom in TBP. Local know there are restrooms in the park. Other neighborhoods that aren’t in a 5-mile radius of TBP & they are open to the public the same amount. This is a BIG waste of time, citizens tax dollars all for a structure that we honestly don’t need. The $186,500 for the money to better use maintenance/cleaning the existing bathrooms in larger parks and recreational facilities.”

“While having restrooms at Trolley Barn Park would be a convenient amenity, the hard truth is that it will a) become a magnet for the homeless and drug abusers and b) will require daily maintenance that will be very expensive. This idea has been revisited on multiple occasions throughout the years and each time it gets shot down because the bathrooms will ultimately be unsafe, unsanitary and nearly impossible to maintain unless they are cleaned multiple times a day and locked at night. Let’s spend our funds on more meaningful projects like expanding our existing library, planting trees, improving existing parks and adding more off-leash dog space including a dog park.” – Jennifer Bishop

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“Voice of UH” response to this idea.

We implore Councilmember Whitburn, Mayor Gloria, and City staff to explore a public/private partnership with the future business that is currently under construction across from the park. We believe there must be a way to incentivize a new business (and help drive foot traffic), while seeing the city an astronomical amount of money that could be better used towards other more urgent needs – homeless outreach, housing? This would be a better outcome all around, not just for park neighbors and community residents, but for all park users (especially those who “need to go”).

— UHCA Board of Directors

Survey was created by UHCA and conducted online from February 13 to April 15, 2022 and in this print News April edition.

Many respondents to our survey provided well thought-out points, and UHCA News is happy to feature select comments here (to protect privacy, we are not including names unless explicitly agreed to). To ensure that comments are presented fairly, comments for and against have been included in approximately the same percentage as the full survey results including all comments are at www.uhda.org/news/reseachsurvey2023 with a link to the original article.
BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

SPOTLIGHT ON LEFT COAST QUINTET

Since 2014, the local and talented Left Coast Quintet has entertained at hundreds of San Diego events, and you might have seen this group of musicians over the past few years doing “open rehearsals” at Trolley Barn Park.

The Left Coast Quintet, or LCQ for short, was founded by UH resident Dan Weiss, who is the group’s bassoonist and artistic director. The musicians in the group include Erica Gamble on flute/piccolo, April Leslie on Clarinet, Jenny Shippee on French horn. Each of the LCQ musicians has been performing for over 25 years in symphonies and stage productions.

LCQ is a “classical-ish” musical group, and while small wind ensembles are not as well known in the world as string quartets, wind quintets have been around since the 1700s when they were used in symphonies and chamber music. LCQ does not just stick to Baroque and classical music; their library is full of jazz and swing, blues, pop covers, European influences and jigs, samba and flamenco, waltzes, and more. But the group primarily loves performing film music: everything from Disney favorites Beauty and the Beast or Aladdin, to Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Harry Potter, and more.

You can find LCQ at a number of San Diego events, including Art Walk, Little Italy Christmas Celebration, Mission Hills Garden Walk, December Nights, and similar public celebrations. The group is also available to be hired for private events like weddings, holiday parties, galas, and memorial services, and can be sized between the full quintet down to a trio, or a small duet, depending on the needs and space.

Keep up with the LCQ to find out all the fun performances and what they are up to:
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/ leftcoastquintet
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/ leftcoastquintet
- Website: www.leftcoastquintet.com

If you love creating web content and want to give back to the UH community you love by helping keep it connected and informed, we have a great way for you to help!

The UHCA Communications Team needs folks with Square Space or WordPress experience, and want to give back to the UH community you love by helping keep it connected and informed.

visit www.uhsd.org/Volunteer or email volunteer@uhsd.org

Introducing New Owners of Twiggs continued from front page:

and work where people could gather and meet their fellow neighbors while sipping coffee and eating delicious pastries. Adrian thought about opening a coffee shop in the South Bay area. His friend and fellow professor at Miramar College suggested he talk to her husband, Ruben Sandal, about joining him in this venture. Ruben, who has an MBA, had been working in corporate America for over 15 years. He always had an interest in the science of coffee and was contemplating changing careers and opening a coffee shop. Ruben and his wife live in Hillcrest and were as fond of Twiggs as Adrian was.

In order to make their dream a reality, Adrian sought the advice of the one person he considered the guru of coffee shops, Bernie Horan from Twiggs. Adrian and Bernie met many times and talked a lot about the business. During one of these conversations, Bernie said he and Dan were selling Twiggs and perhaps Adrian would be interested in buying it. Flattered, humbled, and honored by Bernie’s offer, Adrian felt like he had been given the keys to a beautiful ’57 Chevy! He began the slow, arduous process of securing a loan and buying Twiggs. After 11 long months, the deal was done. And on April 1, Adrian became the new owner of Twiggs. Adrian named Ruben to be his operational manager of both Twiggs shops, the one on Park Blvd. and the one on Adams Avenue.

As the cliché goes, if it ain’t broke don’t fix it. Adrian and Ruben are keeping all the same staff and coffee suppliers. Bernie and Dan have been showing Adrian and Ruben the ropes and will continue to do so for the next few months. As mentors, Bernie and Dan are committed to helping Adrian and Ruben smoothly transition to running Twiggs like a well-oiled coffee machine.

In addition to being a college professor and new business owner, Adrian is also a poet. He imagines Twiggs being a hub for the local art community. Adrian would like to see Twiggs on Adams Avenue hosting live music and podcasts. He wants Twiggs on Park Blvd. to become a central hub for the visual arts and poetry readings.

Adrian knows that the UH community loves Twiggs and wants it to continue as the premiere business anchor in UH. A place where people can gather and make new friends, a home away from home. Adrian and Ruben are dedicated to keeping the legacy of Twiggs alive for generations to come.

— Jane Gilbert

Pet of the Month

Hi Everyone: My name is Casey, I’m 11 years young and I live with Dick King in Madison Avenue Villas. Dick adopted me from the Humane Society 6 years ago and we’ve been besties ever since!

We like to take walks, nap, and watch TV. We also like a good steak! I also live with my cat sister Evie – I don’t like her too much and I bark at her throughout the day to let her know who’s boss (Evie is a lot bigger than me so I don’t get too close!).

Hope to see you around!!

— as told to Stay Holts by Casey

Mission Hills Community

GARAGE SALE!

SAT MAY 14 8-NOON

FURNITURE & ART & BABY & TODDLER GEAR & ELECTRONICS & BOOKS & HOUSEHOLD & CAMPING GEAR & GARDEN ANTIQUES & BAKED GOODS & OVER 80 PARTICIPATING HOMES!

On day of sale, maps and addresses of homes are available at the Compass office at 1621 West Lewis St. 619-809-1103.
Vermont Street bridge, as a member of the UH Beautification Team, Deborah worked to get the city and county to contribute money to clean out the canyon. She also volunteers weekly at the Neil Good Day Center (part of Father Joe’s Villages). And she is currently reaching out to people who administer PATH (People Assisting The Homeless) in San Diego.

It is through these experiences that Deborah has come to understand the homeless people in our community are not getting the help they need, despite the amount of money being spent on the effort. She believes there are multiple issues that cause a person to live on the streets, but her focus is on those who require the most help—the mentally ill and the addicts.

Deborah’s friend Katharine lives on the other side of the Vermont Street bridge in Marston Hills, where she has lived since 1993. She walks her dog early in the morning and hands out apples and oranges to her homeless “neighbors.” She would like to see the local business community get more involved in helping those who sleep on the streets.

Both women feel there is a need for more communication and coordination between the local charities and organizations that are dedicated to helping the homeless. There are many resources available—some that work and some that don’t. Deborah and Katharine would like to assist in coordinating the efforts of all those who work and volunteer so that their efforts are maximized to solve this crisis.

They would also like our local governmental leaders to be more accountable regarding the homeless crisis. Despite the millions of dollars that the Regional Task Force grants to local organizations, there is no accountability for how the money is being used, they say. A lot of money dedicated to helping the homeless population seems not to be making a difference in the lives of the homeless or their housed neighbors. Deborah and Katharine believe that money is only part of the answer, not the entire answer to helping solve the homeless crisis in our neighborhood and city. Money must be used effectively to really help.

Deborah and Katharine want to start small and focus on helping those who are homeless in our neighborhood. They believe we need to rethink how we tackle the homeless situation, starting with educating ourselves about who the homeless really are and what they really need. Listening to them instead of telling them we know what is best for them is a start. Then we can proceed to holding current organizations accountable.

— Jane Gilbert