

# SENIOR REPORTER

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FEBRUARY 2024

"Serving The Needs of Orange County & Long Beach Seniors Since 1974"



## Mel Brooks

*"If you're quiet, you're not living. You've got to be noisy and colorful and lively."*  
— Mel Brooks



### What's Inside ...

Flashback .....	4
Mel Brooks .....	6
Travel .....	8
Calendar of Events .....	11
Classifieds .....	12-13
Song Preview .....	14
Book Club.....	17
In The Spotlight .....	18
Fabulous Finds .....	20
Tinseltown Talks .....	23
Movie Review .....	25
Beaten Path .....	28
Gadget Geezer .....	32
Life After Mother .....	37
Busy Boomers.....	39



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♥ VALENTINE'S DAY ♥  
POP QUIZ

See how much you know about the LOVE-filled holiday:

Valentine's Day is the most popular occasion for sending greeting cards

Everyone loves to get a box of chocolates

**MYTH!**

**MYTH**

According to the Greeting Card Association, about 145 million greeting cards will be bought for Valentine's Day, making it the second most popular card-sending occasion in the U.S. Christmas is the most popular.

For people who have potentially life-threatening (severe) allergies, getting a box of chocolate might not be a welcome gift. **Many chocolates may contain some of the most common food allergens like cow's milk, eggs, peanuts and tree nuts.**

The average adult spends more than \$100 to celebrate Valentine's Day

**FACT!**

125.03

\$\$\$

The average adult celebrating the holiday will shell out \$126.03, according to the National Retail Federation.

More than half of people purchased flowers or plants as gifts for Valentine's Day 2013

**You can experience a life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) from a kiss**

## MYTH!

### FACTI

36% 64%

Twenty-five percent of adults purchased flowers or plants as gifts for Valentine's Day 2013; of those, 64% were men and 36% were women, according to AboutFlowers.com.



It is possible to experience a life-threatening allergic reaction if you kiss someone who has eaten something to which you are allergic. Your best bet is to ask your loved one to stay away from your allergens before you pucker up.

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## 'Maybe It Will Grow on Me'

By Randal C. Hill

The Nike “Swoosh” symbol is so well recognized worldwide that it can stand alone without naming the Oregon sports apparel empire. The iconic logo was the brainchild of Carolyn Davidson, a now-comfortably-retired graphic designer — with the primary emphasis being on “comfortably.”

In 1969, Davidson met future business kingpin Phil Knight when she was a graphics design student at Portland State University, and he was a part-time accounting instructor there. As Knight passed Carolyn in a hallway one day, he overheard her telling some friends that she wanted to take an oil painting class but couldn't afford the paints. The next time Knight saw her, he said, “Excuse me, are you the one who can't afford to take oil painting?”

Knight told Davidson he needed a part-time graphics artist to create charts and graphs for his business meetings. (Since 1964, Knight and partner Bill Bowerman had had a side job running Blue Ribbon Sports, the West Coast distributor for Tiger shoes from Japan's Onitsuka Co.) Knight offered to pay her \$2 an hour for her work, and she readily accepted.

She completed all the projects Knight brought to her. Then, one day in 1971, Knight pro-

posed something new — an assignment for a logo. Citing hassles from Onitsuka, he and Bowerman had decided to strike out on their own and offer a new line of clefted shoes. Their company would be called Nike, who in Greek mythology was the winged goddess of victory. A factory in Mexico was ready to begin shoe production, and Knight and Bowerman wanted a logo that conveyed motion and speed for their fledgling footwear.

Davidson figured she worked 17.5 hours on the project, so she submitted a bill for \$35 — equal to about \$250 now — to Knight and showed him five potential designs, each drawn on tracing paper and laid over the side outline of a shoe. Knight didn't really like any of the images, but he chose the wing-like Swoosh. “Well, I don't love it,” he grumbled, “but maybe it will grow on me.”

Blue Ribbon Sports became Nike later that year, and the Swoosh was on its way to becoming one of the best-known images in the world, eventually being displayed on everything Nike, including shoes, socks, pants, hats, T-shirts, jerseys, and coats.

Davidson earned a PSU degree in graphic design and stayed with Nike through 1975 when she decided to freelance and do charity volunteer work from home.

In September 1983, Knight invited Davidson to have lunch at the Nike headquarters. That luncheon turned out to be a surprise party for her. After multibillionaire Knight told Carolyn that he was glad that his \$35 check hadn't bounced 12 years earlier, she was given a box of chocolate Swooshes, a Swoosh-shaped gold ring, and 500 shares of Nike stock.

Over four decades and numerous stock splits later, her Nike holdings would now total about 32,000 shares and be worth around \$4 million. Davidson has never cashed in a single one of those shares.

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# You Gotta Be Kidding!

(An April Fools' Day Filler) By Randal C. Hill

One Monday evening in 1957, the switchboard at the London office of the BBC came ablaze with blinking lights, as overwhelmed operators frantically explained that, no, they had no information about where one could purchase a spaghetti plant.

That's not a typo. The English current-affairs program called "Panorama"—much like our "60 Minutes"—had shown a video clip allegedly of Swiss farmers harvesting freshly grown spaghetti in their annual spaghetti harvest. The next day on the London news, the BBC admitted that what they had aired was an April Fools' Day prank.

Twenty-three years later, again on April 1, those fun-loving BBC Brits announced that Big Ben's clock face was going digital, and that whoever called the office first would win the clock's massive hands. It is unknown how many people fell for that one.

The playing of practical jokes has been around for centuries, but exactly when folks started to embrace them is anybody's guess. Over the years, historians have cited numerous rites and festivals as possible beginning points, but few have agreed about just when April Fools' Day became somewhat of a holiday.

One thing for sure is that much



chuckle-producing activity has transpired in our lifetimes here in the USA:

April 1, 1985, saw the printing of a Sports Illustrated magazine article about a rookie pitcher named Sidd Finch, who could throw a fastball 168 miles an hour. (The current record is 106 mph.)

Even the folks at NPR (National Public Radio) have exhibited a first-of-April sense of humor. In 1992, the "Talk of the Nation" show aired Richard Nixon (voiced by master imitator Rich Little) announcing another run for the presidency with the slogan "I didn't do anything wrong, and I won't do it again."

Apparently, fast-food folks also enjoy a good April 1 hoax. In 1996, the Taco Bell chain announced that it had purchased the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia and would rename it the Taco Liberty Bell. Two years later, Burger King folks promised that a "left-handed Whopper" was forthcoming.

Over the years, some people have fallen for the same old ab-

surdities, which have included being sent to a hardware store for a left-handed wrench, to a pharmacy for "pigeon's milk," or to a bookstore for a copy of "The History of Eve's Grandmother."

Of course, not everybody has a sense of humor. In 2021, the Thailand police force announced that posting or sharing false news online could lead to a maximum of five years imprisonment. (C'mon, guys, lighten up!)

While some April Fools' Day hoaxes, pranks and practical jokes have garnered praise for their innovation and creativity, some people—usually victims—have described such antics as crude, insensitive or rude. Whatever our take on this issue is, we should be on our guard when it comes to April 1 and what is announced in newspapers, on radio and TV stations, and internet websites that keep us informed—and some long-running traditions alive. You have been warned.

Anybody hungry for some freshly harvested spaghetti?

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# The Story of Mr. Kaminsky

By Les Goldberg

When comedians get up on stage in front of live audiences, on camera, or behind a microphone on the radio, their main job is to make us laugh. But what makes them funny? Where does the endless stream of jokes come from?

For some answers, we put our spotlight this month on one of the most iconic, unique, and influential humorists of our time, the one and only Mel Brooks who, at 97, is still keeping his loyal fans in stitches.

So, what tickles his elongated funny bone? Like most comedians, the humor is a backlash at their lives' adversity. His early life experience is a prime example.



*Courtesy of DeviantArt*

He was born on a tenement kitchen table in Brooklyn to Kate and Max Kaminsky. His father's family were German Jews, and his mother was from Kyiv in the Russian Empire, now Ukraine. At two years old,

his father died of tuberculosis of the kidney. Brooks later reflected on his father's death: "There's an outrage there. I may be angry at God, or the world, for that. And I'm sure a lot of my comedy is based on anger and hostility. Growing up in Brooklyn, I learned to clothe it in comedy to spare myself problems – like a punch in the face."

By the age of nine, however, young Max went to a Broadway show with his uncle and saw "Anything Goes" with William Gaxton, Ethel Merman, and Victor Moore. After the show, he told his uncle that he was not going to work in the garment industry like everyone else in his family but was going into show business.

At 14, he worked at a Borscht Belt hotel as a poolside entertainer and met 18-year-old Sid Caesar. He also met Buddy Rich, who grew up in his Brooklyn neighborhood and

who taught him how to play the drums. At 16, he performed his first comedy gig as a last-minute fill-in for a sick master of ceremonies.

During that same year, he changed his name to Mel Brooks and graduated from high school.

When WWII broke out, he joined the Army and became a radio operator and eventually landed in Belgium where he found himself in the Battle of the Bulge. He survived the combat and later spent time defusing land mines in Germany. War records reveal that when Brooks heard Germans singing over loudspeakers, he responded by singing into a bullhorn, "Toot, Toot, Tootsie Good Bye" by Jewish singer Al Jolson.



*Courtesy of Flickr*

It is also recorded that he spent time in the stockade after taking an antisemitic heckler's helmet off and smashing him in the head with his mess kit.

With the end of the war in Europe, Brooks joined the Special

Services as a comic touring Army bases and he was made acting corporal, put in charge of entertainment in Wiesbaden, and then performing at Fort Dix, N.J.



*Courtesy of Flickr*

After the war, his mother secured him a job as a clerk at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but Brooks decided to go to the Catskills instead where he started working as a drummer and pianist in the various resorts and nightclubs. When a regular comic got sick, Brooks' career as a stand-up comic began, telling jokes and making movie-star impressions.

He also began acting in summer stock, appearing on radio shows, and emerging as a needed to!

By the age of 24, Brooks was writing jokes for his friend Caesar along with Woody Allen and Larry Gelbart. At the insistence of Caesar, Brooks read

*Continued on page 33*

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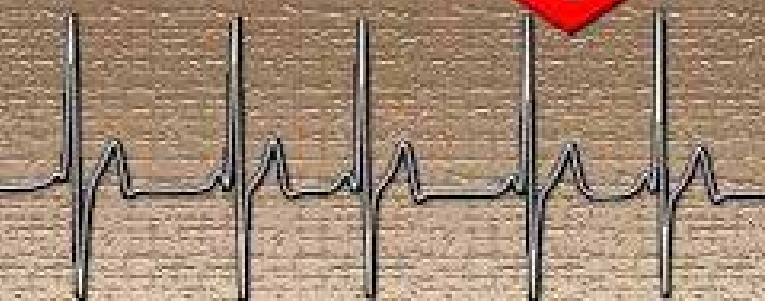

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## On The Road Again ...

# History Buffs Love Old Towns

By Shana McCann

If you love history, especially the human condition and architecture that has shaped our local communities, then you will love visiting the “Old Townes” in Orange County, Long Beach, and surrounding Southern California areas.

So many of the nearby cities, even perhaps the community you live in, have specially designated historic districts where, at least on the building facades, homes and businesses are required to preserve the look and feel of the era in which they were built. In the case of Orange County and Long Beach, for instance, it would be the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

These districts are regulated by the city historical societies which are empowered to enforce the rules of preservation for the buildings and landmarks that have stood the test of time.

After touring most of the local “Old Townes” I can say without hesitation that these groups have done a remarkable job. The Main Street USA is alive and well in such places as the cities of Orange, Tustin, Santa Ana, San Juan Capistrano, and downtown Long Beach.

Oh, and did I say they make for a fun outing for the whole family?

### Old Towne Orange



A case in point is Old Towne Orange. The charm of the downtown area is highlighted by the Orange Circle at the intersection of Glassel Street and Chapman Avenue. Like the round-a-bouts found mostly in the Eastern cities, drivers must navigate the roads that surround the central Plaza Park, a casual gathering place for orange residents and visitors for more than a century.

The adjacent streets are designed for shopping, dining, and frequent city events, like the Orange International Street Fair, an Autumn festival, a farmer's market and craft fair, and the holiday tree lighting ceremony and candlelight choir procession.

Old Towne Orange is also home to Chapman University, the city hall, and the Orange Public Library & History Center.

### San Juan Capistrano

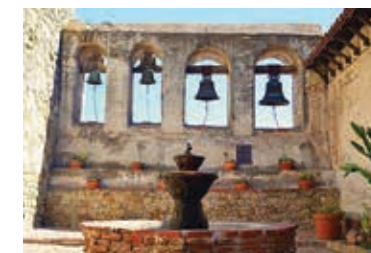


One of the oldest towns in all

of California is San Juan Capistrano. Located alongside the Pacific Coast Highway between Laguna Beach and San Clemente in South Orange County, the city is the home of the famous Mission that bears its name.



Of course, the historic district encompasses the mission and its surroundings featuring the Legend of the Swallows, a well-preserved train depot, an equestrian heritage, a renowned library, and several community-curated adobes and historic buildings.



The culture of the city is evident in the many festivals, concerts, and art shows which are within walking distance of one another throughout the year. Interestingly, the city was the site of one of the first wine-producing areas in the state.

### Old Town Tustin

In the heart of Orange County, deep into an area once covered by farms, fields, and groves, is Tustin, a city that has main-

*Continued on page 26*

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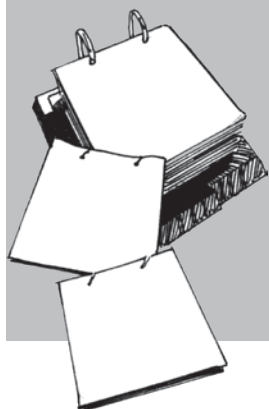


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# FEBRUARY Calendar of Events



Enjoy these upcoming events with friends, family, grandkids, or anyone else who is looking for some great February fun in the area.

## ***Costa Mesa Playhouse presents: "Buried Child" by Sam Shepard***

***Costa Mesa***

***Through Feb. 25***

An alternately funny and macabre look at a Midwestern family with a dark secret, weaving a twisted family drama of epic proportions. When a grandson brings home his girlfriend to meet the family, he uncovers the destructive nature of family secrets. Winner of the 1979 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. At 661 Hamilton St. Costa Mesa. Call 949-650-5269.

## ***Annual San Juan Capistrano Rotary Car Show***

***San Juan Capistrano***

***Feb. 3***

This event draws 400 exotic and classic show cars and more than 1,000 automotive enthusiasts. This car show is a major fundraising event that enables the SJC Rotary Club to help local charities thrive. At San Juan Capistrano Community Center/Sports Park, 25925 Camino del Avion, San Juan Capistrano.

## ***Bowers Museum Presents: Chinese Lunar New Year Festival***

***Santa Ana***

***Feb. 4***

***11 a.m. to 3 p.m.***

Celebrate with the Bowers Museum during the free family festivals held monthly in the beautiful Key Courtyard. Celebrate the Year of the Dragon with a lively Chinese New Year Festival and enjoy free art activities, face painting, dance, and music performances. At Bowers Museum, 2002 North Main St., Santa Ana.

## ***Surf City USA Marathon & Half Marathon***

***Huntington Beach***

***Feb. 4***

This award-winning, Boston-qualifying, course is considered one of the best courses in the country and is well known for being scenic and flat. Runners come from all over to experience this exhilarating run. The race starts along the Pacific Coast Highway and passes by the famous Huntington Beach pier. At 21100 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach. Email [info@runsurfcity.com](mailto:info@runsurfcity.com) or call 888-422-0786.



## ***TET FESTIVAL***

***Costa Mesa***

***Feb. 9 to 11***

Helping preserve Vietnamese culture, the Tet Festival attracts more than 100,000+ audiences and hundreds of booths during the three-day weekend event. Visitors are immersed in an array of traditional foods, live entertainment, festive games, and customs celebrating the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. At OC Fair & Event Center, Costa Mesa.

## ***2024 Tet Parade***

***Westminster***

***Feb. 10***

The opening ceremony begins at 8:30 a.m.; the parade begins at 9:30 a.m. Honor and celebrate local Vietnamese American culture at this traditional event. See beautiful displays and musical entertainment celebrating the Lunar New Year. The Tet Parade is a grandiose event that has celebrated the Lunar New Year in Little Saigon for over two decades. Every year Vietnamese communities across the globe tune in to watch the event broadcasted by local TV stations and social media platforms. The Tet Parade features floats, marching bands, lion dances, color guards, veterans and youth organizations, martial arts, multi-cultural attires, elected

officials, scout organizations, community organizations, and local and international businesses. At parade begins at the intersection of Bolsa Avenue and Magnolia Street, and heads eastbound on Bolsa Avenue. The parade will turn right on Bushard Street and head southbound, ending at Bishop Place.

## ***German Style Carnival FASCHING***

***Huntington Beach***

***Feb. 11***

***3 p.m. to 6 p.m.***

Families with children ages four to 17 are welcome to join an afternoon filled with activities, dances, and games led by teachers of German School Campus.com. A family fun event with traditional Fasching delicatessens like the famous "Berliner," Krapfen, and Currywurst. At Old World Village, 7561 Center Ave., Huntington Beach. \$5 admission and hosted by German Campus School.

## ***Laguna Beach Music Festival***

***Laguna Beach***

***Feb. 16 to 18***

The Laguna Beach Music Festival features pianist Jeremy Denk, winner of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship and the Avery Fisher Prize, as artistic

director. Denk is one of America's foremost pianists, proclaimed by the "New York Times" as "a pianist you want to hear no matter what he performs." At Laguna Beach.

## ***Spectrum Sailing Camp Newport Beach***

***Feb. 21 to 23***

***9 a.m. to 4 p.m.***

Spectrum Sailing is a 501c3 and the only National Autism Sailing Program. This free three-day sailing camp is specifically curated for children on the spectrum. Registration is open on the website. 20 local autistic kids between the ages of 10 and 17 will be selected for this incredible opportunity. At Orange Coast College School of Sailing & Seamanship, 1801 West Coast Hwy., Newport Beach. Email [kim@spectrumsailing.org](mailto:kim@spectrumsailing.org) or call 225-936-9425.

## ***The Kid's Pet Parade San Juan Capistrano***

***Feb. 24***

Part of the annual Fiesta de las Golondrinas celebration. Kids between the ages of five to 12 can show off their favorite animals in a contest for, The Cutest, Most Unusual, Best Team Costume (owner and pet), Funniest & Most Obedient (pet, not child).

*Continued on page 26*



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by Robert Bruce Woodcox

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Everyone who comes to me says the same things: "I've been wanting to do this for a long time, but didn't know how to start. I'm not a writer and so time seems to just keep slipping away."

*Continued on page 26*



## 'The Way We Were'

Barbra Streisand

By Randal C. Hill

Marvin Hamlisch, who was responsible for writing the music to Barbra Streisand's *"The Way We Were,"* used to utter an unusual prayer. Starting in 1964, when he was 20 years old, he would privately plead, "Please, God, let Barbra Streisand sing one of my songs."

A piano-playing prodigy from age five, Hamlisch graduated from New York's Queens College in 1967. The first job he landed soon afterward was as a rehearsal pianist for *"Funny Girl,"* with —of all people — Barbra Streisand.

One day years later, Hamlisch got a phone call from a friend about writing a song for a film that would star Robert Redford and Streisand. Thrilled by the possibility of his prayer actually paying off, Hamlisch resolved to capture the movie script in a single song. "I wanted to reflect all of the sorrow and despondency and pain of their relationship, the star-crossed nature of it," he explained later.

But knowing that his tune would be custom created for Streisand gave Marvin pause: "No matter what I was doing, I could hear Barbra's voice in my head and recall how wonderful she sounds when she holds certain notes. I wanted to let her soar. I was determined not to write something drippingly sentimental."

Hamlisch eventually produced what was, to him, a perfect composition: "I'd been trying minor key melodies but thought they might have told you too much in advance that Streisand and Redford were never going to get together. So, I wrote a major key melody that was sad but also had a great deal of hope in it."

Enter the lyric-writing couple Alan and Marilyn Bergman, who a few years earlier had garnered an Academy Award for penning the words to *"The Windmills of Your Mind"* from the film *"The Thomas Crown Affair."* As a fitting complement to Marvin's work, the duo created poignant word images that succinctly captured the essence of the Redford-Streisand tale:

*"Memories light the corners of my mind.*

*"Misty watercolor memories of the way we were.*

*"Scattered pictures of the smiles we left behind.*

*"Smiles we gave to one another for the way we were ..."*

Hamlisch and the Bergmans performed the song for Barbra at her home. Although she was reluctant at first — she initially proclaimed it too sentimental — Streisand finally agreed to record what would become the Academy Award-winning classic for Columbia Records.

But all of his hard work almost didn't matter, as Streisand's song was omitted from the original film version of the *"The Way We Were."* The determined Hamlisch, however, convinced Columbia's studio moguls to hold two test screenings.

The first audience sat unmoved by the final scene (with no song), where Streisand and Redford realize they have no future together. The next screening included Barbra's tune. Hamlisch recalled, "I heard a woman start to cry. And then another. And within minutes, there wasn't a dry eye left. I knew I was right."

One assumes that Hamlisch soon became a proponent for prayer.

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*"The Way We Were."* Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc., 1999.



# February Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. Rude insolence
5. Crafts' partner
9. Actors without words
14. Et \_\_ (Latin for "and others")
15. Expert
16. Garlicky sauce
17. Northwestern US city known for woolen goods and an annual "Round-Up" (rodeo)
19. Fabric made from flax
20. Run-down or shabby
21. Japanese bar fare
23. Ft. Worth campus
24. Neither Dem. nor Rep., politically
26. Coffee alternative
27. Makes a choice
28. Showed off a muscle
31. Word said while pointing
33. Also
34. Nearly empty
36. Trapper's load
39. Tax return destination (abbr.)
40. Central US city on the Arkansas River
43. George Gershwin's brother
44. One of a hockey player's pair
46. Sphere
47. "Electric" fish
48. Encourage with a little push
51. Place that serves grub
54. Leaf in a book
56. Ancient
58. Went for a jog
59. Western Native American
60. Gaze fixedly
62. Ridiculously silly
66. Untrue
68. Southeast US city with a Naval Air Station
70. Floating force
71. Leave port
72. Band's itinerary
73. Positive answers

74. Swirling water
75. Snow day vehicle

Down

1. Missing parts
2. Away from the wind
3. Actor's sentence
4. Lassie's beau
5. ID checker's concern
6. Country road feature
7. "Speckled" fish
8. Early evening specta
9. Where Timbuktu is

10. Big Ben afternoon hour
11. Northeastern US city that's a state capital
12. Choose at the polls
13. Site of congestion
18. Bobcat, for one
22. Villainous laugh
25. Sliced meat vendor
27. Load bound for a smelter
28. Tined utensil
29. Southwestern US city where Hollywood is
30. Physician, familiarly

32. Govt. smog monitor
33. "My country, \_\_ of thee ..."
35. One of the five Ws
37. Low-ranking card
38. Erie Canal mule
40. Got married
41. Anger
42. Old ski lift
45. Mon. follower
49. Received
50. Pass, as time
52. Triumphant cry
53. Makes into law

54. A bit swollen
55. "\_\_ of Two Cities"
57. Anticipate with fear
60. Tennis units
61. "Idylls of the King" woman
63. Put one over on
64. Exhaust vent
65. Outdoor area
67. Observe
69. Like a fox





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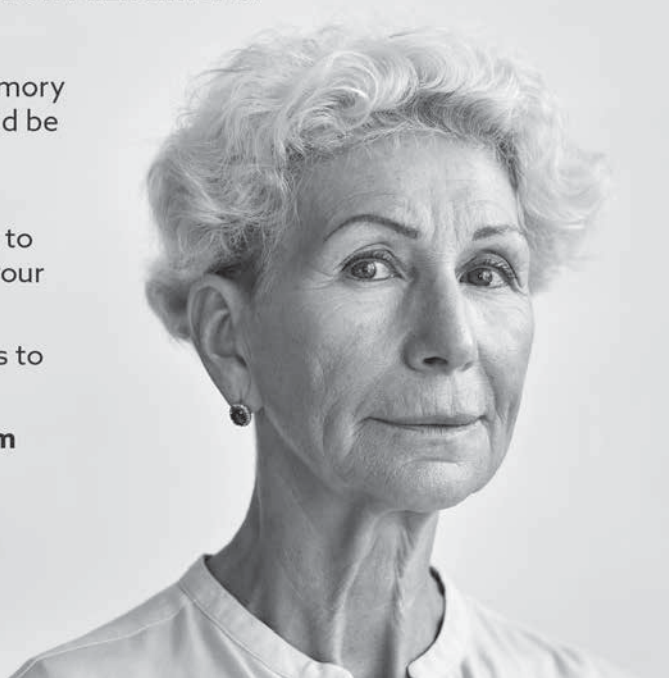
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## Valentine's Day

Many people around the world celebrate Valentine's Day by showing appreciation for the people they love or adore. Some people take their loved ones for a romantic dinner at a restaurant while others may choose this day to propose or get married. Many people give greeting cards, chocolates, jewelry or flowers, particularly roses, to their partners or admirers on Valentine's Day.

It is also a time to appreciate friends in some social circles and cultures. For example, Valentine's Day in Finland refers to "Friend's day", which is more about remembering all friends rather than focusing solely on romance. Valentine's Day in Guatemala is known as Day of Love and Friendship). It is similar to Valentine's Day customs and traditions countries such as the United States but it is also a time for many to show their appreciation for their friends.



“EVERY MORNING MY HUMAN SHAVES OFF HIS FACE FUR, HE'S FUNNY LIKE THAT.”

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# February Book Club

family must never learn the truth.

“A decade prior, Cecily had been desperate

to be more than a housewife to a low-level bureaucrat in British-colonized Malaya. A chance meeting with the charismatic General Fujiwara lured her into a life of espionage, pursuing dreams of an ‘Asia for Asians.’ Instead, Cecily helped usher in an even more brutal occupation by the Japanese. Ten years later as the war reaches its apex, her actions have caught up with her. Now her family is on the brink of destruction — and she will do anything to save them.

“Spanning years of pain and triumph, told from the perspectives of four unforgettable characters, *The Storm We Made*’ is a dazzling saga about the horrors of war; the fraught relationships between the colonized and their oppressors, and the ambiguity of right and wrong when survival is at stake,” according to Publisher S&S/Marysue Rucci Books.

## *Here in Avalon*

By Tara Isabella Burton

“Rose has come a long way. Raised — and often neglected — by a wayward mother in New York City’s chaotic bohemia, Rose has finally built the life she’s always wanted: a good job at a self-help startup, a clean apartment, an engage-



ment to a stable if self-satisfied tech CEO who shares her faith in human potential, hard work, and the sacrifice of childish dreams.

“Rose’s sister Cecilia, on the other hand, never grew up. Irresponsible and impetuous, prone to jetting off to a European monastery one month and a falcon rescue the next, Cecilia has spent her life in pursuit of fairy-tale narratives of transcendence and true love — grand ideas Rose knows never work out in the real world. When Cecilia declares she’s come home to New York for good, following the ending of a whirlwind marriage, Rose hopes Cecilia might finally be ready to face adulthood: compromises and all.

“But then Cecilia gets involved with the Avalon: a cultish-sounding cabaret troupe — one that appears only at night, on a mysterious red boat that travels New York’s waterways — and soon vanish-

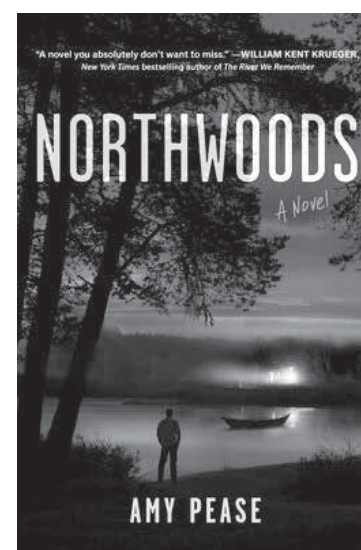
es one of a growing number of suspicious disappearances among the city’s lost and loneliest souls. Rose can only find Cecilia by tracking down the Avalon herself.

“But as Rose gets closer to solving the mystery of what happened to her sister, the Avalon works its magic on her, too. And the deeper she goes into the Avalon’s underworld, the more she begins to question everything she knows about her own life, and whether she’s willing to leave the real world behind,” according to Publisher Simon and Schuster.

## *Northwoods*

A Novel

By Amy Pease



“The dark underbelly of an idyllic Midwestern resort town is revealed in the aftermath of a murder with ties to America’s opioid epidemic in this unputdownable and thrilling debut that is perfect for fans of James Lee Burke, William Kent Krueger, and Mindy Mejia.

“Eli North is not okay.

“His drinking is getting worse by the day, his emotional wounds after a deployment to Afghanistan are as raw as ever, his marriage and career are over, and the only job he can hold down is with the local sheriff’s department. And that’s only because the sheriff is his mother — and she’s overwhelmed with small town Shaky Lake’s dwindling budget and the fallout from the opioid epidemic. The Northwoods of Wisconsin may be a vacationer’s paradise, but amidst the fishing trips campfires, and Paul Bunyan festivals, something sinister is taking shape.

“When the body of a teenage boy is found in the lake, it sets in motion an investigation that leads Eli to a wealthy enclave with a violent past, a pharmaceutical salesman, and a missing teenage girl. Soon, Eli and his mother, along with a young FBI agent, are on the hunt for more than just a killer.

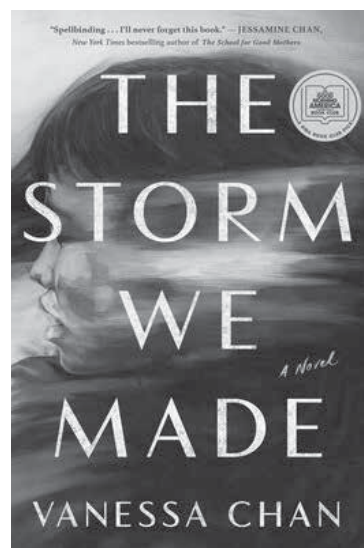
“If Eli solves the case, could he finally get the shot at redemption he so desperately needs? Or will answers to this dark case elude him and continue to bring destruction to the Northwoods?” according to Publisher Atria/Emily Bestler Books.

*Continued on page 24*

## *The Storm We Made*

A Novel

By Vanessa Chan



“Malaya, 1945. Cecily Alcantara’s family is in terrible danger: her fifteen-year-old son, Abel, has disappeared, and her youngest daughter, Jasmin, is confined in a basement to prevent being pressed into service at comfort stations. Her eldest daughter Jujube, who works at a tea house frequented by drunk Japanese soldiers, becomes angrier by the day.

“Cecily knows two things: that this is all her fault; and that her



# In The Spotlight

## For the Love of Needlework: Anita Weissman-Small

Being able to craft something with your own two hands can be satisfying and a wonderful way to spend your free time.

It's also a nice way to relieve stress, meet new friends, and do needlework with others like the Laguna Woods-based Needlework's Club.

One of its members, Anita Weissman-Small, 75, has created some amazing projects in the group and on her own. Below she shares more info about the crafts and the club that sounds pretty darn entertaining!

**Senior Reporter: What is the Needlework's Club? When did it form? How often do you meet? How many members?**

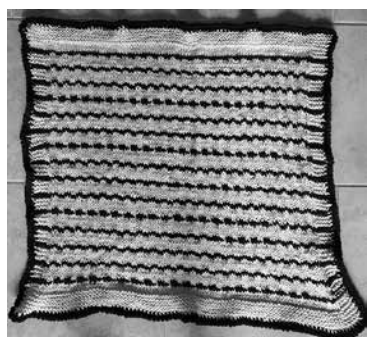
**A: The Needlework's Club is a group that gets together every Thursday to knit, crochet, embroider, loom, and do other craft projects. There are approximately 50 members. The Needlework's Club has been in existence since 1979. Our purpose is to meet in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere while doing whatever type of needlework we choose. This includes members participating in various charity projects. These include creating caps or hats for cancer patients and veterans, and knitting and crocheting baby items including teddy bears, blankets, lap blankets, and hug-me shawls for the elderly.**



**All are donated to local charities. Other projects include items for sale at Bonanza. This helps provide money to purchase yarn for the club.**

**Q: Do you have to be a member to enjoy the club?**

**A: Everyone is welcome to come to a meeting for free to see if it is something they would be interested in joining. If they would like to come regularly, membership is required.**



**Q: When did you personally get involved in needlework? What kind? Any special projects you've done?**

**A: I moved to Laguna Woods in 2018 and joined the Needlework's Club. I knit and crochet.**

**Q: What's the best part of this group?**

**A: I enjoy the camaraderie of the club and how everyone is always willing to help everyone else.**

**Q: Can anyone learn to do needlework? Is it difficult?**

**A: Anyone can learn to knit, crochet, embroider, loom, or other needlework with patience.**

**Q: Do you teach people how to do the crafting in the club?**

**A: We will help someone with a project if they already know the basics, but we do not teach. The Saddleback Emeritus has classes to teach.**

**Q: What do you personally get out of needlework? Relaxation? A great craft? Etc.?**

**A: I love to knit and crochet, and it is nice to be able to pursue this in a friendly atmosphere with others. I feel honored to be able to learn something new each week from other members.**

**Q: Where were you born?**

**A: Bronx, New York.**

**Q: Your education? Dreams as a kid in terms of career?**

**A: BA, Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, Fla., Physical Education teacher.**

**Q: Are you retired? From what**



**type of career?**

**A: Retired owner of a mini spa (electrolysis, laser hair removal, massage).**

**Q: Are you married? Kids?**

**A: I have been married to Shel B. since 2009. I adopted his four grown children. I consider myself a very lucky person to have been accepted into this wonderful family and enjoy nine grandchildren.**

**Q: Wish for 2024?**

**A: My wish for 2024 is less anger, more acceptance of those who are different than you, and PEACE.**

**For more information about the Needlework's Club contact Anita Weissman-Small at 212-696-5270 or via email at waliwal@aol.com**





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# Fabulous Finds

By Debbie L. Sklar

Here are some wonderful **Fab Finds** to kick off your February after all the holiday madness. From a delicious lip plumping balm to an easier way to shave these are items not to miss.

## LAWLESS Beauty



The beauty brand known for 'Clean Like You've Never Seen' products has expanded its most viral shade, Cherry Vanilla! Originally launched in 2022, Forget the Filler Plumping Gloss and Overnight Plumping Mask in Cherry Vanilla amassed a loyal cult following of celebrities, influencers, and industry experts with a nostalgic cherry-vanilla flavor and universally flattering sheer red tint. After customer requests to expand the shade and flavor in other lip formats, Cherry Vanilla will be available in LAWLESS' best-selling **Forget the Filler Lip Plumping Balm Stick**, which features a new and improved formula inclusive of 2500% more Shea Butter for increased comfort, softness, and glide. Finally, Cherry Vanilla will get the "royal treatment" with the addition of a Queen-Sized For-

get the Filler Plumping Gloss, giving Cherry Vanilla loyalists a plumped-up option that is almost 2x the size of the original gloss!

The entire Cherry Vanilla line is an extension of the brand's game-changing Forget the Filler franchise which gained industry praise with its first product - Lip-Plumping Line-Soothing Gloss, in January 2021. Each lip product within the franchise is packed with Maxi-Lip, a patented natural peptide, clinically proven to enhance volume. The Forget the Filler franchise has seen such success that LAWLESS Beauty expanded the line into new categories such as skincare with the Lip Plumping Mask and Perfecting Cream, with more slated in years to come.

LAWLESS Beauty's Queen-Size Forget the Filler Lip-Plumping Line-Soothing Gloss in Cherry Vanilla retails for \$39, Forget the Filler Lip Plumping Line-Soothing Tinted Balm Stick and Forget the Filler Lip-Plumping Line-Soothing Gloss in Cherry Vanilla retail for \$26, and Forget the Filler Lip-Plumping Mask in Cherry Vanilla retails for \$22. All are available on LAWLESSBeauty.com, Sephora stores, and Sephora.com.

## Boom! For Mature Skin Rebranding



This rebrand is not just a new name but a renewed mission to empower more women facing the realities of maturing and menopausal skin. The brand attentively listened to the desires and requirements of this community, wanted to celebrate its vibrant individuality with this rebrand while promoting self-love, and embracing every stage of life with enthusiasm and joy.

**BOOM! Beauty** embodies a strengthened commitment to inclusivity and genuine representation, embracing the beauty found in every woman's unique aging journey. With a dedicated focus on mature skin health, the brand is devoted to addressing the evolving skincare needs of the community. Providing a nurturing and inclusive beauty experience, BOOM! Beauty combines effectiveness, vitality, and playfulness.

At the heart of BOOM! Beauty's success lies in their meticulous formulation process, which prioritizes clean, cruelty-free, organic ingredients, sustainability, as well as health and safety primarily. Each product is carefully crafted to minimize toxins, ensuring that users can confidently

incorporate BOOM! Beauty into their skincare routines without compromising their well-being. This dedication to excellence has earned BOOM! the esteemed endorsement of dermatologists, who recognize the brand as a trusted ally in achieving healthy and radiant skin.

BOOM Beauty's ethos, defined as "Care, Simplify, and Celebrate," drives them beyond enhancing skin health to enrich life with joy and connection.

Visit BOOMBeauty.com.

## Panasonic Palm Shaver



Panasonic furthered its sixty-five-year legacy of personal care innovation with its new **Palm Shaver** and exciting new attachments for its popular **MULTISHAPE**, both of which are ideal for use at home and on the go.

The Panasonic Palm Shaver (ES-PV6A-W) is a compact, five-bladed shaver designed to fit in the palm of your hand. It features a five-blade system that can capture and cut every texture of the beard, ensuring a smooth and close shave every time. Powered by a linear motor, the ES-PV6A-W comes with advanced sensing

technology from Panasonic, adapting to the face's contours and ensuring each shave is customized to its user's unique grooming needs.

The Palm Shaver body uses NAGORI, a sustainable material created from sea minerals. Aligned with Panasonic's goal of creating a more recyclable, sustainable world, the inclusion of NAGORI materials together with radically re-thinking the form factor reduces plastic usage by 40 percent when compared to Panasonic's conventional grooming products. A shave rocket-sized and powerful shaver is designed to fit seamlessly into any lifestyle, making it the perfect device for at-home or on-the-go grooming. It supports USB-C charging and comes with a carrying case, so it can be used in a variety of situations, whether that's at home, at the office, or during travel.

In addition to the Palm Shaver, Panasonic is launching brand new attachment heads for the MULTISHAPE, which is a modular personal care system designed to evolve with its users' needs.

This year, Panasonic is adding facial exfoliation and cleansing brushes that address skin care, a pedicure buffer for foot care, and even more hair

*Continued on page 23*





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# Tinseltown Talks

By Nick Thomas

## Carole Wells Remembers Ann Sheridan

Born 109 years ago in February, glamorous actress Ann Sheridan (1915-1967) was destined for branding as the “Oomph Girl” following a mock contest organized by the Warner Bros. publicity department in 1939.

Stunning on-screen and becoming a favorite pin-up girl of World War II troops, Sheridan could play any character – tough or tender, funny or flirty, sassy, or seductive. She delighted audiences with her witty wisecracks and clever comebacks. While she certainly possessed an abundance of entertainment oomph, her feelings were mixed about the public label throughout her life.

The Texas native starred in some memorable films of the 1940s such as “*The Man Who Came to Dinner*,” “*Angels with Dirty Faces*,” and “*I Was a Male War Bride*,” but never really landed a lead role in a true Hollywood blockbuster in her more than 80 feature films.

In declining health at just 50, Sheridan ended her career in the little-remembered TV comedy western “*Pistols ‘n’ Petticoats*” that ran for one season in the 1960s. Co-starring with Carole Wells, the former “*National Velvet*” series actress was one of the last to work



Carole Wells

with Sheridan and played her daughter in the CBS show.

“I’d never met her before that,” Wells told me in 2020. “In fact, I didn’t really know who she was – she had been a star before I was born.”

The two first met the first day on set.

“We sat around a big table and read the script with the producers, writers, and director, and she was very charming but rather quiet,” Wells said. “We would do this every week before filming, and she was always just a down-to-earth sort of person.”

Wells said the two chatted often but never became very close during the months they worked together.

“I’d see her in the mornings in

the make-up department and give her a hug and say, ‘How ya doin’ Annie?’ And she’d say something like ‘wish I felt as good as you sweetie’ – she called everyone sweetheart or sweetie. She was never well from the beginning of the series.”

In the mornings Sheridan was usually OK, according to Wells, but by noon usually couldn’t work.

“It took a lot out of her, and she would have to go back to her dressing room,” said Wells who would spend lunch hour learning Sheridan’s lines that would be rewritten for Wells to work into the script if Sheridan couldn’t make it back to the set. “But I didn’t care because I knew she was ill.”



Cast of “*Pistols ‘n’ Petticoats*”, Carole Wells top right, Ann Sheridan bottom right. Photo courtesy CBS.

Wells also remembers Sheridan as a chronic smoker.

“As sick as she was with can-

cer and emphysema, she was never without a cigarette in her mouth except while filming,” Wells said. “She was very frail, thin, and kept getting thinner as the series progressed. I watched her die in front of me. But with all she was going through, I never heard her complain and she was always very kind and respectful to me.”

Sheridan struggled through most of the series but was too ill for the final half-dozen episodes.

“I knew she wasn’t going to be around much longer,” Wells said. “One day she was on the set, then the next day she wasn’t, and we never saw her again. When we heard she had passed away, the cast had a lunch to memorialize her.”

Wells believes doing the show was good for Sheridan who still bravely displayed plenty of ‘oomph’ despite her failing health.

“Before the series started, she had a facelift and got herself together,” Wells said. “I think being part of the show might have helped her live a little longer.”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery in Alabama and has writ-

ten features, columns, and interviews for numerous newspapers and magazines (see [www.getnickt.org](http://www.getnickt.org)).

### Fabulous Finds

Continued from page 20

grooming tools, including a detail trimmer, and a hair clipper. The MULTISHAPE system is broadening its scope to cater to a wider range of personal care needs while also growing alongside its users as their diverse preferences and needs shift.

The Panasonic Palm Shaver (ES-PV6A-W) will be available in the U.S. in September 2024 and the Panasonic MULTISHAPE attachments will be available on Shop.Panasonic.com in 2024.

Learn more about Panasonic’s ideas and innovations at [na.panasonic.com/us](http://na.panasonic.com/us)





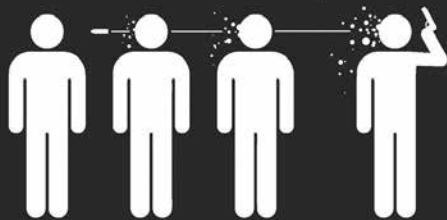
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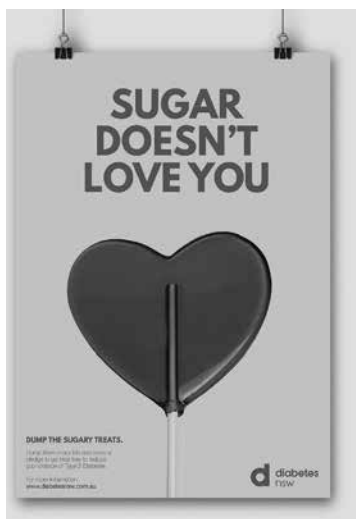
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## February Book Club

*Continued from page 17*

### *The Writing Retreat* A Novel

By Julia Bartz

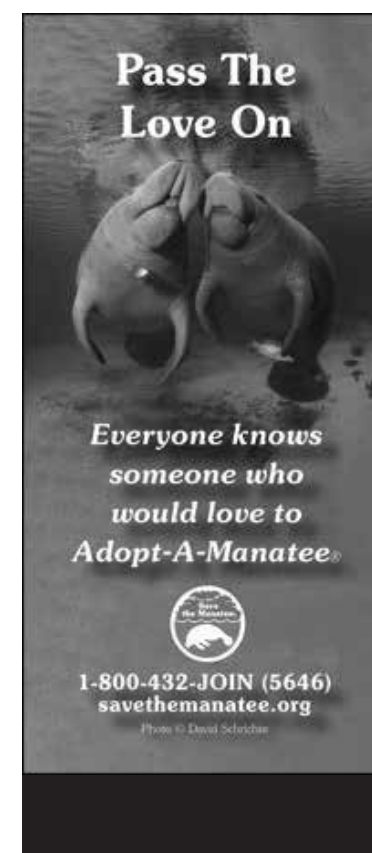


“A young author is invited to an exclusive writer’s retreat that soon descends into a pulse-pounding nightmare — in the vein of *The Plot* and *Please Join Us*.”

“Alex has all but given up on her dreams of becoming a published author when she receives a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: attend an exclusive, month-long writing retreat at the estate of feminist horror writer Roza Vallo. Even the knowledge that Wren, her former best friend and current rival, is attending doesn’t dampen her excitement.

“But when the attendees arrive, Roza drops a bombshell — they must all complete an entire novel from scratch during the next month, and the author of the best one will receive a life-changing seven-figure publishing deal. Determined to win this impossible contest,

Alex buckles down and tries to ignore the strange happenings at the estate, including Roza’s erratic behavior, Wren’s cruel mind games, and the alleged haunting of the mansion itself. But when one of the writers vanishes during a snowstorm, Alex realizes that something very sinister is afoot. With the clock running out, she must discover the truth — or suffer the same fate,” according to Publisher Atria/Emily Bestler Books.






 ADMIT  
ONE

By Randal C. Hill

# Movie Preview

## 'The Taste of Things'

Can food represent both love and nourishment? According to the film *"The Taste of Things,"* the answer is obvious.

The opening scene of Tran Anh Hung's quiet little movie runs 38 minutes and involves few words. Never bored, we are instead transfixed by people busily preparing broths, pastries and meats that steam and sizzle and make us drool in anticipation. (The scene takes place in a spacious country kitchen in a time before electricity or plug-in appliances.) Eventually, the magnificent cuisine is brought to appreciative guests waiting in the dining room, where each savors every bite and finds no need to talk during the course of the meal.

We haven't become impatient about the length of the unhurried introduction; what is happening without words is so pleasurable and fulfilling and soothing that dialogue seems superfluous.

Dodin (French film star Benoit Magimel) is a highly respected gourmet who has overseen today's meal preparation with the confidence of one who has basically lived in a kitchen for decades. His busy partner is Eugenie (Academy Award-winner Juliette Binoche), who is not simply an accomplished cook but a highly skilled food artist.

Like the others bustling about, she finds consummate joy in what she helps to create.

Dodin and Eugenie have lived together for 20 years in Dodin's manor house and are partners in every sense of the word. The best of friends, they share occasional nights together when Dodin saunters through the darkened hallway of his home and taps on Eugenie's bedroom door, which she opens willingly. He has often proposed marriage but has always been rejected.

One key scene shows them relaxing in their moonlit garden after a tiring day in the kitchen.

"We've spent more time together than many spouses," Eugenie remarks.

Dodin responds with, "I ask you once again ... marry me."

Eugenie, who has been down this road many times before, smiles patiently. "How many times will you ask me?" Undoubtedly, she concerns herself with the changes that would possibly take place if the pair made their always-comfortable relationship "official."

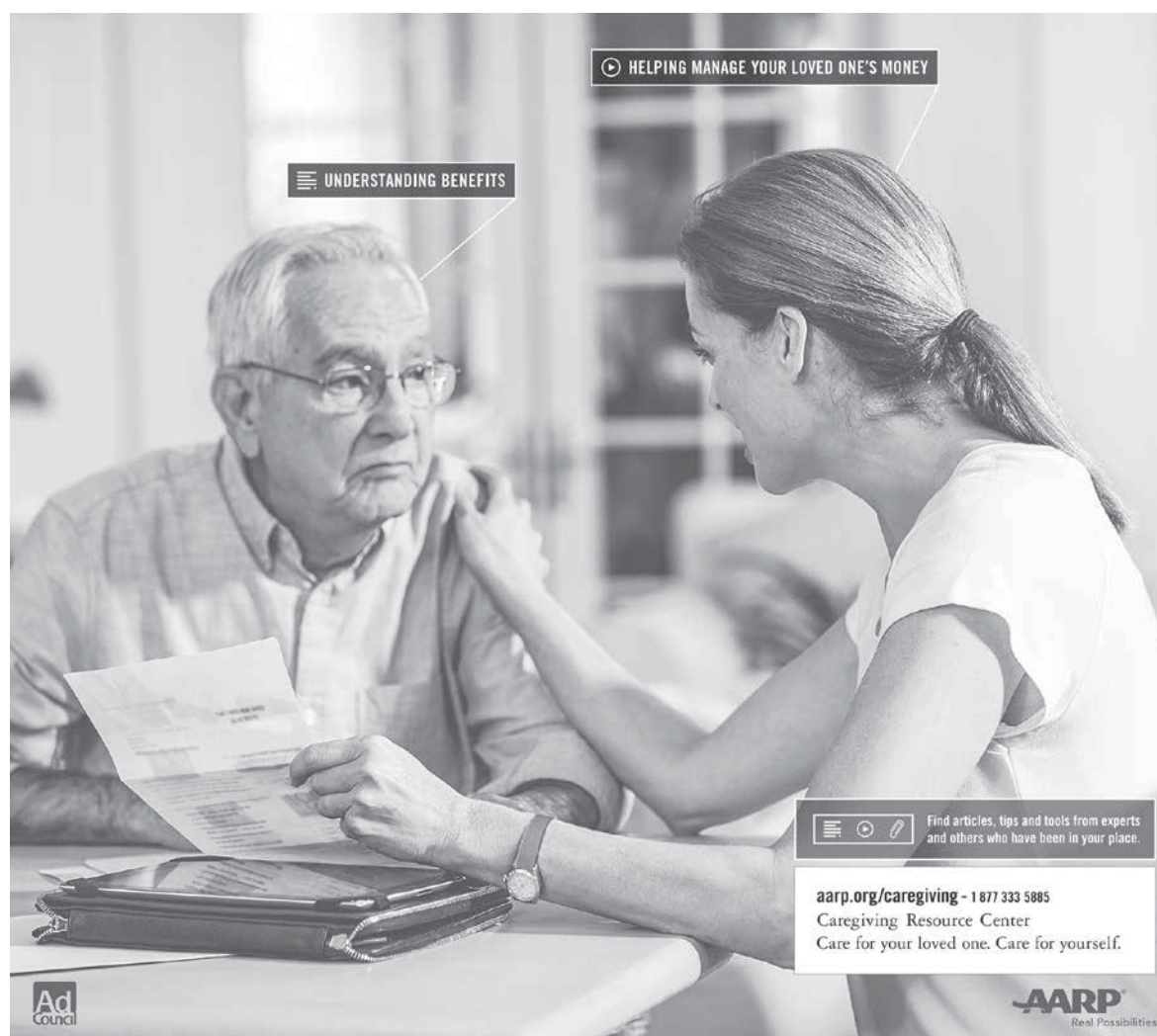
*"The Taste of Things"* is based on Marcel Rouff's French novel *"The Passionate Epicure."*

Be aware: The February 9 movie release is in French with English subtitles, and it won't be easy to find outside of a city that screens foreign films. If you live in a smaller place, please clip this review for future streaming information. The wait will be worthwhile for this wonderful story of food preparation and how the care we take with it can demonstrate our deepest feelings for other people.



# Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

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## February Calendar

*Continued from page 11*



A special “Judges Choice” prize will be awarded, and the winner will be allowed to be in the Swallows’ Day Parade. At Los Rios Park, 31747 Los Rios St., San Juan Capistrano. Call 949-615-1920.

### Ongoing Events

#### Santa Ana Art Walk

*Santa Ana*

**First Saturday of the Month  
6 p.m. to 10 p.m.**

Downtown Santa Ana comes alive with arts on the first Saturday of each month when galleries, theatres, artists, and performers in the Artists Village host a monthly Open House for the public. This free event attracts as many as 1500 individuals who come from throughout Los Angeles and Orange County to walk more than 150 participating studios and galleries located in historic buildings in the heart of downtown Santa Ana.

The monthly event will give you access to buy original artwork from some of Southern California’s freshest, edgiest, and most talented artists. It also will have open viewings of working lofts owned by artists and designers all in an award-winning urban setting.

#### Orange County Museum of Art - Lecture Series Newport Beach

These informal salons bring together artists participating in 15 Minutes of Fame: Portraits

from Ansel Adams to Andy Warhol and New Art for a New Century: Contemporary Acquisitions 2000-2010, who will participate in casual conversations with other artists, OCMA curators, and critics. At 850 San Clemente Drive, Newport Beach. Call 949-759-1122

#### Mission Art Center Painting for Fun Workshop

A painting workshop is great for friends, couples, or individuals who are looking to have fun with music and painting! This workshop will teach you how to paint with simple methods. At the end of the session, participants will have one completed canvas to take home with them. All supplies are provided. No prior art experience is required. Many times, some of the best paintings are done by people who have never painted before the workshop. It isn’t about talent; it’s about the process and how much you will enjoy the painting! 2.1/2 hours workshop, Supplies included Refreshment available. At Mission Art Center, 1730 N. Tustin St., Orange.

#### Bolsa Chica Conservancy - Wetlands Tour Huntington Beach First Saturday of the month 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Offers an exceptional on-site presentation of the Bolsa Chica Story. On the first Saturday of

each month, docents gather at the south lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, across the street from the main entrance to Bolsa Chica State Beach. Docents are stationed on or near the footbridge, a truly magnificent entrance to the restored Bolsa Chica wetlands. Tours begin every 15 minutes, and five areas of interest are included in the presentation: history, birds, endangered species, ecology, and restoration. This free tour is on a first-come, first-served basis. This is a wonderful opportunity for vacationers, students, small groups, and local citizens to visit our valuable resource. At Bolsa Chica Conservancy South lot of the Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve, 3842 Warner Ave., Huntington Beach. Call to reserve private tours, at 714-840-1575.



## On The Road Again ...

*Continued from page 8*



tained its charm and quaintness to this day.

That charm, however, is personified by the few blocks of real estate designated as a historical landmark, Old Town Tustin. Dating to the 1880s, the businesses, homes, and buildings are preserved to their original architectural splendor.

A sidewalk tour is the best way to navigate the many shops and restaurants in town, especially along Main Street and El Camino Real. Among the landmarks are the homes that reflect Victorian, California Monterey, and Craftsman styles. All serve to bring California history to life.

There are so many places – too many to mention in this column – where you can witness the area’s history up close and personal. Places like Fullerton, where the railroad influenced the growth of the city, and Long Beach, severely damaged by the 1933 earthquake only to be revived by the Navy’s presence in World War II and the discovery of oil in nearby Signal Hill.

While I love history and appreciate the developments that

resulted in our thriving, hustle, and bustle lifestyle of modern living, I also yearn for a return to the simple life like that experienced in the small towns of yesteryear.

I think you will too.

## Tell Your Life Story...

*Continued from page 14*

Or...

“I’ve wanted my husband to tell his story for years. Our family and friends have also been after him, to no avail. You came along at just the right time to kick start this important project for us.”

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# AI in Homebuying: Separating Fact from Fiction

The homebuying journey has undergone a radical transformation in the digital age. Long gone are the days of sifting through stacks of paperwork, replaced by a streamlined, tech-driven consumer experience. As part of this progression, artificial intelligence (AI) is being woven into the fabric of daily life and has the potential to have a massive effect on the path to homeownership, offering tools that make finding and purchasing a home easier than ever before.



Beyond the financing, remote home tours—powered by AI—can virtually transport shoppers to a prospective home, letting them explore every nook and cranny with 360-degree views. AI-driven platforms can also sift through mountains of listings to recommend homes that match a buyer's preferences, budget and lifestyle, creating a personalized experience and saving countless hours of manual search.

## How AI Changes Homebuying

AI has the power to streamline the mortgage process—often the most daunting part of homebuying. A 2023 report by LiveVox found that AI-driven customer experiences scored 20% higher in satisfaction than traditional human-led approaches. Companies such as Rocket Mortgage are now automating document collection, verifying information instantly and even showing loan officers the best mortgage products for their clients. This efficiency speeds up the process and increases confidence for consumers.

“AI is not just a technological advancement, it is a transformative force reshaping the homebuying landscape,” said Brian Woodring, Chief Information Officer for Rocket Mortgage. “AI is the compass guiding us toward a future where homeownership is accessible and stress free for everyone.”

## The Importance of Human Involvement with AI

While AI is certainly transformative, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. When it comes to such things as credit decisioning, humans still take the lead. Credit decisions are complex and nuanced, requiring a deep understanding of a person's financial history and current circumstances. AI can provide data and options, but the final call should always be made by a human who can interpret the subtleties and make an informed decision.

Moreover, AI cannot replace the personal touch of a real estate agent or the reassurance and expertise of a loan officer. These human interactions and

*Continued on page 29*

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If you live in California or are simply visiting and picked up this newspaper, below are some fast and fun facts about the state that you might not have known.

Next time you're at an event, party, or function, impress your guests with knowing these things about the Golden State.



#### Off the Top

- Nickname: The Golden State
- Statehood: 1850; 31st state
- Capital: Sacramento
- Biggest City: Los Angeles
- Abbreviation: CA
- State Bird: California Valley Quail
- State Flower: Golden Poppy

The name California comes from a 16th-century Spanish novel that describes a mythical paradise called California.

The Gold Rush may have helped earn California the nickname the 'Golden State,' as did its Golden Poppies, the state flower.

#### Wildlife, Critters, and Creatures

Keep an eye out for black bears, mountain lions, bighorn

sheep, wild pigs, deer, and elk. And search the skies for a sight of Bald Eagles, California Condors, and California Quails, the state bird. Swimming off the coast are green sea turtles, leatherback sea turtles, California sea lions, sea otters, and blue whales.

#### Plants

About 6,500 types of plants thrive in California. You can see Joshua trees, which grow only in the Mojave Desert; perfumed magnolia trees; thorny coral trees; purple-flowered jacarandas; and lots of cacti.

#### Natural Resources

There's a good chance that the piece of fruit you're enjoying was grown in California. The state is the top U.S. producer of lemons, apricots, avocados, dates, figs, grapes, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, raspberries, strawberries, and many others. And it's not just fruit — California leads the nation in production of almonds, pistachios, and walnuts. It also grows 90 percent of the broccoli that's produced in the United States. The state also produces timber, cement, natural gas, and petroleum.

#### More Fun Stuff

• California's Death Valley is North America's hottest desert, with an average daily high in June of 115.5 degrees Fahr-



enheit. Fill up before you drive there. Gas stations can be 50 miles apart.

- The world's biggest tree by volume is General Sherman, a giant sequoia tree in Sequoia National Park. It's 102 feet around — that's bigger than a basketball court — and may be as many as 2,700 years old.
- More movies have been filmed in California than in any other state.
- Waves that reach over 50 feet high attract surfers to the state. In 1955, Disneyland opened in Anaheim. Since then, about 750 million people have visited the park.

Source: [kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/states/article/california](https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/states/article/california)

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**GRAPHICS: SEASIDE GRAPHICS & PRINTING**



# Landscape Design For Your Home Garden

As Southern California’s premiere horticulturist, landscape designer and consultant, Wayne provides planting plans for your home landscape. As a horticulture instructor at Cal Poly University, Pomona, and U. C. Irvine’s Xeriscape program, Wayne offers you his 45 years of expertise with a design process that guarantees the rebirth of your landscape — your garden.



The design process is simple:

- You meet Wayne at your home to discuss your vision for your home garden.
- Wayne provides an on-site drawing showing plant locations.
- Wayne returns to his office to complete the color specifications page that include plant images, species, sizes, and quantities, along with general notes regarding irrigation and mulch recommendations.
- That same day, you receive draft one, a PDF file with the renovation design and a list of qualified landscape contractors.

By offering creative ideas with photos and descriptions, your landscape design process begins with positive energy—a starting point that grows into the quintessential landscape of your dreams—a beautiful and tranquil outdoor environment. Based on the color images of



drought-tolerant plants, Wayne helps you choose the plants you like; water conservative plants that don’t overgrow and look great for a lifetime.

- You can make as many revisions as you like to the plant palette until you attain the exact plants you like.

Wayne recommends you visit his educational My Garden site to review his 21 garden styles. Simply scan the My Garden QR code below so you can view the garden themes and select a garden style you truly like. Once you review the 21 Garden Styles, you will discover that your favorite garden theme is easy to identify based on your personal energy—likes and dislikes—your home’s location and architecture, and your lifestyle. From experience, Wayne knows you will select the right garden for your home and your family when you see the photos, read the descriptions, and visualize your new exterior living space.



After meeting with homeowners for the past forty-five years, Wayne is extremely confident he can draw a landscape plan

exactly right there, on site, while you wait.

Give him a call and he will discuss the rebirth of your landscape. No matter how small the project, Wayne’s clients receive guidance and visual ideas to realize their dream garden.

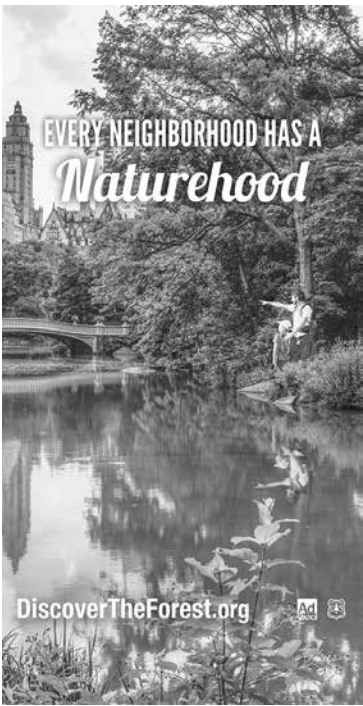
Wayne looks forward to meeting with you at your home. Call him today at: 714.600.5200 to discuss your project.

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See ad on page 8



## AI in Homebuying

Continued from page 27

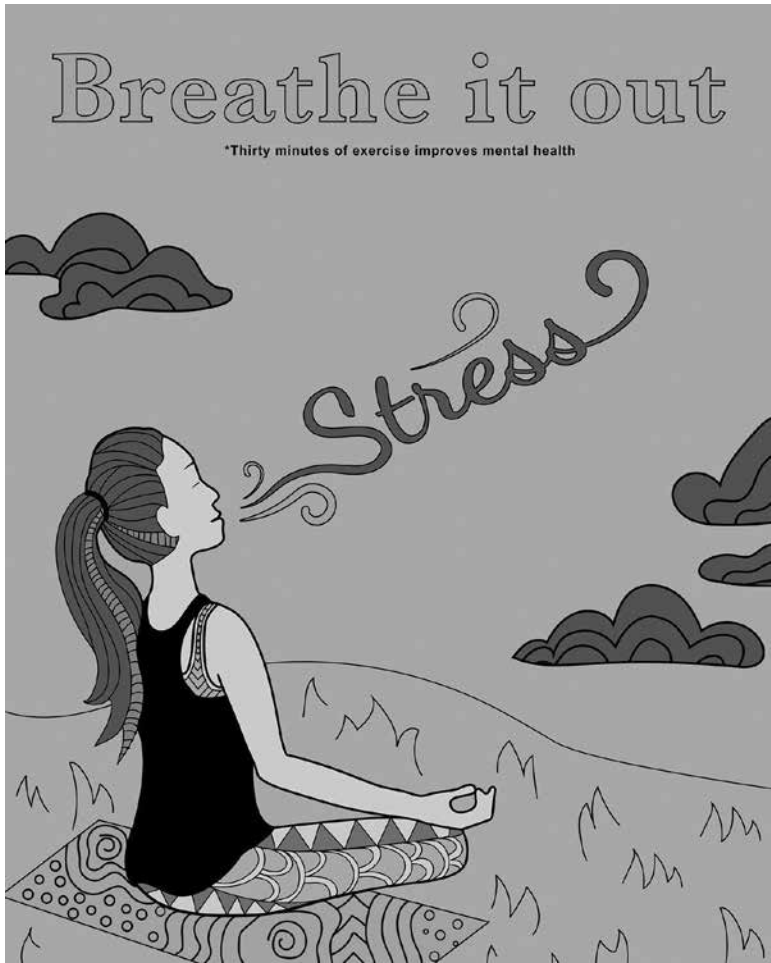
relationships are vital to the homebuying experience, providing knowledge, negotiation skills and emotional support that AI simply cannot replicate.

This combination of AI with the human touch is already showing results. In fact, over the last year, Rocket Mortgage saw it help shorten the amount of time it takes their clients to close on a home purchase by nearly 20%. AI can handle the

heavy lifting of data processing and provide valuable insights, but it takes a backseat where humans perform best—building meaningful connections.


The Future Of Homebuying  
As consumers embark on their homeownership adventure, AI will open doors while the professionals will help them cross the threshold into their new home.

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For further facts and stats on buying a home, visit [www.rocketmortgage.com](http://www.rocketmortgage.com).





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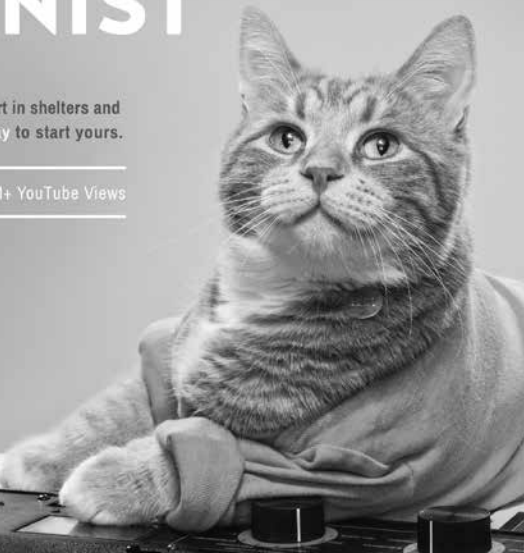
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## Empowering Seniors: A Journey Towards Home Safety and Independence

*By Joey Bolohan, Founder of  
OC Grab Bars*

Nineteen years ago, fresh out of high school and working with my father's bathroom and kitchen remodeling company, OC Contractor, I noticed a recurring request from our customers post-renovation: the need for grab bars in their showers. This observation sparked the inception of OC Grab Bars, a company dedicated to enhancing senior safety in the bathroom and around the home.

Our mission at OC Grab Bars is simple yet impactful: making homes safer and giving seniors back their independence. We specialize in the installation of grab bars, but our services extend beyond just this. We offer handheld showerheads and shower chairs, tailoring our services to the unique needs of each home we visit.

Safety at home, especially for seniors, is more than just installing equipment; it's about creating an environment that respects their independence while ensuring their well-being. Here are some essential tips we advocate:

**Enhanced Lighting:** With age, vision can diminish. Adequate lighting in homes, particularly in areas like hallways and bathrooms, is crucial.

**Rug Removal:** Rugs can pose tripping hazards. Removing



them from high-traffic areas can significantly reduce the risk of falls.

**Motion Sensor Lights:** These are immensely helpful for nighttime navigation to the bathroom or kitchen.

**Strategic Grab Bar Installation:** Not just in showers, but also in areas like steps leading from garages or backdoors.

Our team's expertise stems from over 19 years in bathroom remodeling and a comprehensive understanding of home construction. This background, coupled with our CAPS certification ('Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist'), enables us to expertly place and securely fasten grab bars, ensuring maximum safety and functionality.

A story that stands out in my career involves a US Air Force pilot, who, in his advancing years, found it challenging to safely enter and exit his shower. After a minor slip, he was fearful of bathing independently. When his daughter contacted us, we not only installed the necessary grab bars but also provided the

reassurance and confidence he needed to regain his independence in personal care. The joy and gratitude expressed by him and his family underscore the profound impact of our work.

At OC Grab Bars, we collaborate closely with home care agencies, physical therapists, and occupational therapists, ensuring a holistic approach to senior safety.

As we continue our journey, we invite you to join us in making homes safer for our senior community. Whether you're considering safety modifications for a loved one or for yourself, we're here to provide expert advice and services. Visit our website at [www.OCGrabBars.com](http://www.OCGrabBars.com) or call us at 714-225-9215 for a free over-the-phone estimate. Together, let's empower our seniors to live safely and independently in the comfort of their homes.



*See ad on page 9*

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# The Gadget Geezer

By Les Goldberg

## Tech Innovation Never Ends

*First clue: this Year's Consumer Electronics Show.*

Throughout the 40-plus years I have been attending the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, I have witnessed the modern evolution of technology and its major turning points. First came the personal computer (PC), then the laptop, then the Internet, the smartphone, and so much more that has changed our daily lives in countless ways.

Just when you think you've seen it all, the strings of innovation are being pulled in many new directions. This year, the show's loud buzz sounded in two words: Artificial Intelligence. It is being incorporated into every aspect of the products on display as well as the applications and industries in which they are used.

Here are a few highlights from the show:

### Easy Walking



According to a company called **WIRobotics**, "walking is a valuable form of exercise, but

for many people, it's a challenge, whether because of aging, illness or muscle weakness."

Enter WIM, its robotic assist device you strap around your waist and legs. It is designed to reduce the energy needed to walk by about 20 percent, potentially allowing walkers to go farther and feel less tired.

Using AI technology, the device can analyze gait and predict your movements, becoming "smarter" over time and giving you feedback on your performance.

It also can be used in an exercise mode, providing resistance similar to walking in water and targeting specific muscles. WIM was scheduled to be introduced to the market early this year.

### Tiny Solar EV



For many people, running errands or commuting short distances to work is the function of golf carts. However, the company **Squad Mobility** thinks it has a better idea. It has

introduced the **Solar City** car, a tiny solar-powered electric vehicle expected to sell for about \$6,200.

The little EV can go about 13 miles on a solar charge from its 250-watts-peak rooftop panel with a top speed of about 25 miles per hour.

### OrCam Hearing Aid



Have you ever had a problem trying to listen to a specific voice in a noisy space? Hearing loss is common with the older generation, but modern technology and lower prices are allowing sufferers to enjoy some relief. In addition to hearing aids that are worn inside or outside the ear, a company called **OrCam** is launching an AI-powered app.

Scheduled for release later this year, the app samples voices and creates speaker profiles, which then allow users to choose which voice to isolate at a given time. Other voices and

noise are muted so the user can hear the selected speaker better.

### A Pee Predictor

The ability to know when you need to pee is something you take for granted. But for people with spinal cord injuries, neurological conditions, or various levels of incontinence due to advanced age, a brain-bladder disconnect can cause infections or other unpleasant symptoms.

A solution may be on the way by a South Korean company, **MEDiThings**.

Still, in the lab-testing stage, the product, **MEDiLight** is worn as a patch on the lower abdomen that uses near-infrared technology to "see" into the bladder and tell the user it's time to go via phone alerts.

### At-Home Health Check

How are you at multi-tasking? Can you chew gum and rub your tummy at the same time? If your answers are "Yes" to both questions, then the newest product from LifeSpan in Silicon Valley is right up your alley.

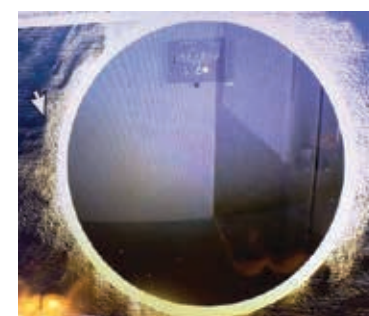
**The Ampera**, priced at \$800, allows you to exercise on a stationary bike while the cycling action generates a charge for your smartphone and laptop.

According to the company, a half-hour of pedaling can charge the average phone about

50 percent and cycling more than 60 revolutions per minute can charge a laptop.

The bike itself resembles a barstool with pedals; it is designed specifically to be small enough for the home office.

### Smart Mirror



Also scheduled to hit the market later this year is the **BMind smart mirror**, designed to offer "personalized mental health coaching" to people who feel moody when they see themselves in the mirror.

The product, produced by a Paris-based health tech company **Baracoda**, uses technology based on AI and natural language processing to analyze expressions and gestures. It then provides guided meditations, light therapy, and affirmations. It also can guide the user through toothbrushing and analyzing the health of his or her skin.

According to the company CEO Thomas Serval, "technology that can monitor for subtle changes in health has the potential of improving the quality of millions of lives." Mirror mirror on the wall ...



# Mel Brooks

*Continued from page 6*



*Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

the “*Dead Souls*” book by the genius author Nikolai Gogol.

“It was a revelation. I’d never read anything like it before. It was hysterically funny and moving at the same time ... It was a life-changing gift, and I still read it once a year to remind myself of what great comic writing can be.”

## The 2,000-year-Old Man

During the 1960s, Brooks began developing comic routines with his new friend and co-writer Carl Reiner.

One of those acts was about a 2,000-year-old man. Reiner played the straight-man interviewer and set Brooks up as several different characters, including a Tibetan monk, an astronaut, and a witness to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The duo’s success landed them appearances on “*The Steve Allen Show*” and the release of a comedy album that sold more than 1 million copies. Brooks and Reiner eventually expanded their routine with two more albums in 1961 and 1962, a revival in 1973, a 1975 animated

TV special, and a reunion album in 1998.

With Brooks’ career climbing to new heights, he wrote the successful Broadway musical “*All American*,” the animated short film “*The Critic*” and created “*Get Smart*,” the popular TV comedy series starring Don Adams as a bumbling James Bond-inspired spy.

For several years, he toyed with the bizarre idea of a musical comedy about Adolf Hitler. He explored the idea as a novel and a play before finally writing a script. His first feature film, “*The Producers*,” was released in 1968 and it immediately became a smash hit, winning the Oscar for best original screenplay. It was later adapted into a Broadway musical, winning 12 Tony awards.



*Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

## ‘Blazing Saddles’

Some critics say that, despite his impressive body of work, Brooks will always be best known for his satire on Western films – “*Blazing Saddles*” – in 1974.

The second-highest box office hit of that year, it received three

Oscar nominations and won the Writers Guild of America Award for best screen comedy. The Library of Congress also placed it in the National Film Registry to preserve its cultural significance.



*Courtesy of Flickr*

Other major achievements in his scriptwriting career include “*Young Frankenstein*,” “*Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*,” “*Silent Movie*,” “*High Anxiety*,” “*Elephant Man*,” “*Frances*,” “*The Fly*,” “*84 Charing Cross Road*,” “*My Favorite Year*,” and “*History of the World Part I*.”

And who can forget Brooks’ second directorial project, “*Spaceballs*” in 1987, a parody of “*Star Wars*.”

Last month, Brooks won the Academy Awards Governor’s Trophy for his lifetime of achievement.

On the personal front, he married actress Anne Bancroft after they met at a rehearsal for the “*Perry Como Variety Show*” in 1961. Their son, Max Brooks, was born in 1972. Brooks has remained single since his wife died in 2005, and last year stated that “once you are married to Anne Bancroft, others don’t seem to be appealing.”

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[HBSymphony.org](http://HBSymphony.org)

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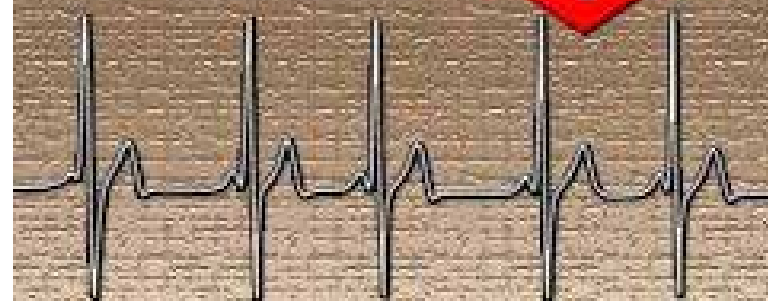
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Crossword Puzzle Answers from page 15

1	G	A	L	L		5	A	R	T	S		9	M	I	M	E	S			
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73	Y	E	S	E	S				74	E	D	D	Y			75	S	L	E	D



# Life After Mother

By Lyn Jensen

*‘Exploring probate and estate issues from personal experience.’*

## The Way We Were

Looking at pictures of the way my family home looked forty years ago, I can gain a new appreciation for the value that family property and possessions hold in our lives. Some of what’s in these pictures is long gone and long forgotten, while others show what made my home and family like no other on earth, and still others show how some things never change.



My father’s DIY mid-century-modern back fence.



My mother’s dresser with mirror and dolls.



Entryway and curio cabinet.



In the kitchen; old floor, old refrigerator, old cat.



My mother’s office took a year to clean!.



My mother’s bed, and partial art collection.



Another view of the kitchen; old table, old wallpaper, old lamp



“Modern” pegboard bath cabinets



Our Danish Modern dining set

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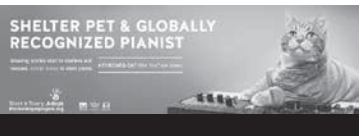
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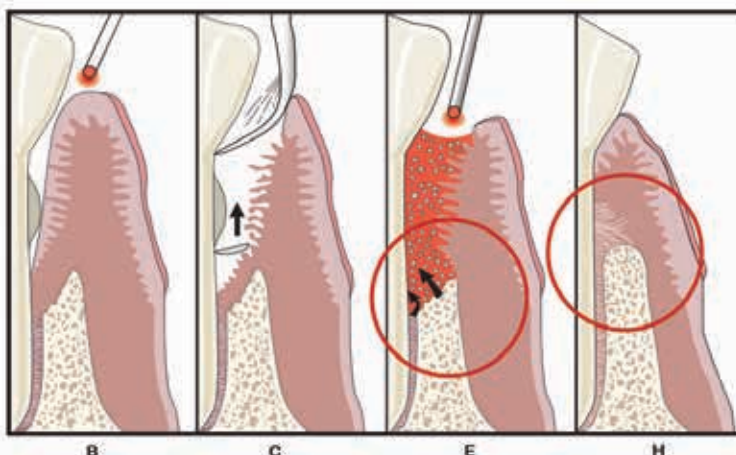




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# Busy Boomers

By Les Goldberg

## Valentine Cards Never Get Old

It's February, a time for Valentine's Day and the age-old expression of love and affection.

Whether you are the shy type or the outwardly aggressive romantic, you can demonstrate to your significant others how you adore them with a quick trip to the nearest greeting card store where Valentine's cards bloom like flowers for every age group, for every relative, friend, or lover.

Or, in today's tech-dominated world, you can click on one of the many online greeting card companies, i.e., 123 greetings.com, and find the card for the special person, complete with animation and music.

Sounds easy, right? It wasn't always so easy, however. There was a day in history when greeting cards were a unique art form and available only to the well-to-do.

Before the mid-February ritual became big business, the tradition of sharing expressions of love at this time of year was perpetuated by true artisans in calligraphy, decoupage, watercolor, paper lace, and other handcrafted materials.

Their work is now coveted as rare and extremely valuable treasures of a bygone era. Some can only be found in museums. Others are bought and sold at

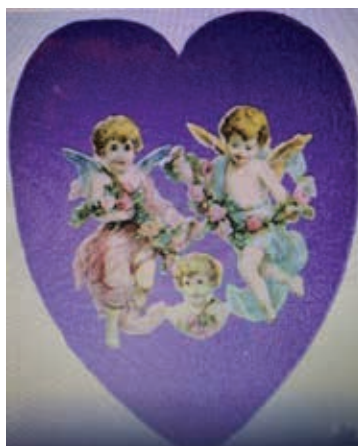
famous auction houses (Sotheby's, Christie's, etc.) where they end up in the hands of serious collectors — like the late Evalene Pulati of Santa Ana.

As the founder of the National Valentine Collectors Association, Pulati has amassed an enormous collection dating back more than 200 years. One of her valentines from 1785, for instance, has a border design coated with bronze dust.

The feast of Saint Valentine has been associated with romance for more than a thousand years. King Henry VII made Valentine's Day a national holiday. Love tokens were frequently given on the feast, always anonymously. Until the 1800s, the cards were handmade and took days to create.

The Golden Age of lace cards began with the invention of lace paper in 1834 and was popularized by the New England Valentine Co., which made cards decorated by hand with paper lace and materials imported from England. During the Victorian era, they featured elaborate confections with movable "mechanicals" such as ships and trains, embossed cutouts, feathers, satin ribbons, silk fringes, human hair, and dressed paper dolls.

The earliest Valentine's Day in America were handwritten



poems, cutouts, folded puzzles, and carefully drawn love knots, often combined with "acrostics," an early form of poetry. Commercial Valentine production began in the U.S. in the early 1800s and by the 1850s Esther Howland became America's first assembly-line producer of high-quality lacy Valentines. Prices for her cards ranged from 10 cents to \$35, about the same cost as a horse and buggy. Today, her small cards sell for anywhere between \$30 and \$300.

At that time woodcuts and hand-colored printed Valentines were in vogue, as well as cutouts and embossed letterpa-

per Valentines, sometimes including a tiny mirror or daguerreotype.

One of her Valentines is called "Lady in Red, Gentleman in Blue." The 1845 hand-tinted lithograph is believed to be part of a courtship that led to marriage.

Another is a lace-framed portrait of a young Queen Victoria in her wedding veil, a souvenir of the royal marriage in 1841. One of them features children with airplanes, which became a frequent card theme immediately after Lindbergh's 1927 solo flight across the Atlantic.

Yet another depicts two well-

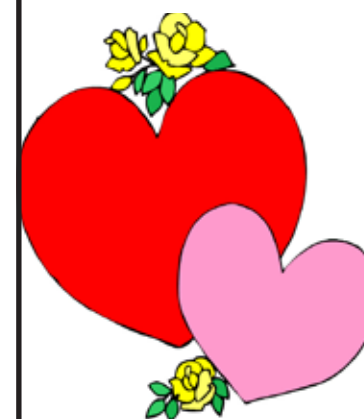
dressed children, a little girl with high-button shoes sitting on a chair as a boy kneels before her. The card reads:

*"Then let me hold you to my heart,  
And every care resign.  
And we shall never, never part,  
My life — my all that's mine."*

Happy Valentine's Day!



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