

SENIOR REPORTER

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FEBRUARY 2023

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

Robert Downey, Jr.

"The lesson is that you can still make mistakes and be forgiven."

— Robert Downey, Jr.



What's Inside ...

Calendar of Events	5
Flashback	6
Classifieds	8-9
Song Preview	10
In The Spotlight	11
Book Club	14
Robert Downey, Jr	16
Off The Beaten Path	17
On The Road Again	18
Gadget Geezer	19
Fabulous Finds	20
Tinseltown Talks	21
Busy Boomers	23
Life After Mother	27
Movie Preview	28

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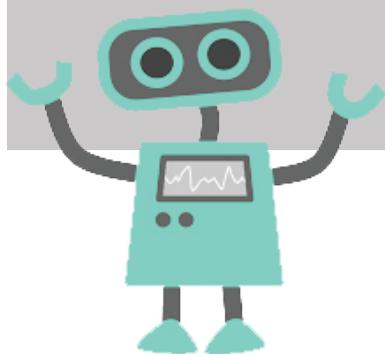
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Technology

By Jim McDevitt

When I arrived in this world, the most advanced technology was one landline phone in the hallway our whole family shared and the radio in the dining room. The radio was plugged into an electric outlet and a long copper wire antenna stretched across the dining room wall and out a window hanging about 6 feet down the side of the apartment building to catch the radio signal.

Every so often the radio would stop working and dad would put the radio on the dining room table and find the one bulb that was not lighting up, pull it and go to a radio repair store down the block and get a new tube. He would put it back in and it was as good as new. I remember our family would gather around the dining room table in chairs and listen to the radio after dinner. Gabriel Heater was the broadcaster and he would report on what was happening in World War II. Sometimes he started with *"There's good news tonight,"* other times it would be *"There's bad news tonight."*

Technology has advanced these days. My wife has something called a Roomba that goes around by itself vacuuming up the dirt from the floors. Roomba is smart enough not

to fall down the stairs, stops at the edge, and turns around. When Roomba runs low on its charge, it plugs itself back in to recharge. My wife only has to empty the dirt of it every so often. It would be nice if I could plug myself in and recharge myself. I would have never guessed that someday I would own a car that was keyless or that some very wealthy people could be in cars that were driverless and drive them to where they wanted to go.

I can't begin to guess what my grandchildren's children will experience in their lives as technology constantly changes things. I never thought I'd see the day when I could ask my phone for driving directions or to look up some historical facts, I said historical, not hysterical facts. I use my cell phone to set a 20-minute timer when I mix my dog Shorty's medicine into his food. He has a condition that requires the medicine to be mixed into his food and to wait 20 minutes for it to dissolve before feeding him. My cell phone goes off like a fire alarm at 20 minutes and I'm up out of my chair and giving my dogs their food at the same time. They know how to wait patiently for the alarm to go off after I mix the food.

I think someday people will be wearing jet packs on their backs to get someplace instead of driving. I believe the day

will come when my grandchildren's children are not using gasoline at all and when cars are driven by power generated by solar. I think that is how homes will be heated and cooled when that day comes. I think solar-operated drones will be programmed to deliver groceries to your front door. I think back to when my parents told me about outhouses and how bathrooms were the newest invention. I have to say I am optimistic for the future with technology delivering many good things to the people on our planet.

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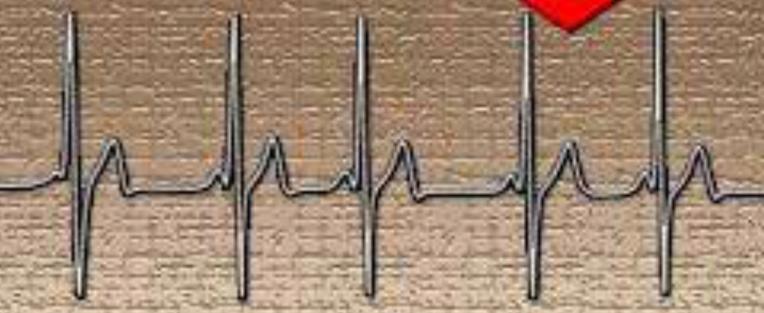
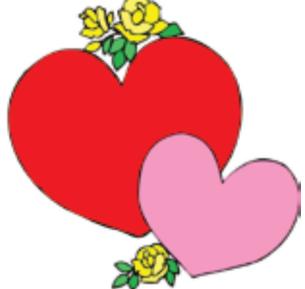
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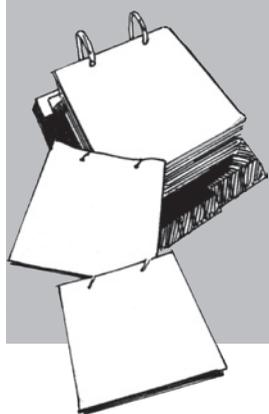
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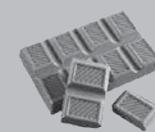
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FEBRUARY Calendar of Events



If you're looking for something to do in February, check out these events in and around the area from reptile shows to Valentine's Day.

Repticon Costa Mesa

Feb. 4-5

Repticon is a reptile event featuring vendors offering reptile pets, supplies, feeders, cages, merchandise, live animal seminars, and frequent free raffles for coveted prizes. Exciting, educational, and family-oriented. Cost: \$13 general admission, \$6 child admission, free for children ages 4 and younger. Parking is \$12. At, OC Fair & Event Center, Huntington Beach Building.

Bowers Museum

Presents: International Festival of Chocolate

Santa Ana

Feb. 5

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Love chocolate? Indulge in chocolate samples and purchases from local chocolatiers. Chef Martin will present chocolate recipes from Mexico and South America. Enjoy music and dance performances from the chocolate lands. The entire family can participate in free art projects and face painting. At, The Bowers Kidseum, 1802 N. Main Street, Santa Ana.

Surf City USA Marathon & Half Marathon Huntington Beach

Feb. 5

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 Huntington Beach pier. At, 21100 Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington Beach. Call, 888-422-0786.

Annual San Juan Capistrano Rotary Car Show

San Juan Capistrano

Feb. 11

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.

Valentine's Day Sunset Cruises

Feb. 12-14

Sail with the sunset on a whale-watching cruise aboard the Dana Pride featuring com-

plimentary champagne. Other cruises include a sparkling wine-tasting cruise on a luxurious catamaran —complete with four organic sparkling wine tastes and a chocolate bar. On the Valentine's Day sunset cruise, enjoy whale watching with complimentary chocolate treats and bottomless champagne. See the website for the schedule. \$29-52. At, 34675 Golden Lantern, Dana Point. Call, 888.224.0603 or visit danawharf.com

Hornblower Cruises

Feb. 12-15

Sail away in the name of love this Valentine's Day. Spend a romantic night on the water and enjoy champagne, gourmet food, and sweeping views of the water. From a romantic Valentine's Day dinner cruise to a Sunday champagne brunch, Hornblower has the perfect cruise for a romantic experience. Starting at \$66.95/pp. At, 2431 W. Coast Hwy., Suite 101, Newport Beach. Call, 949-631-2469 or visit hornblower.com

Cinépolis USA's Loveseat Package

Feb. 13-14

Cuddle up with a blanket and your Valentine in spacious and comfortable seating for a screening of "Deadpool" or "The Notebook." Enjoy a bottle of Cinépolis Private Label

Cabernet or Sauvignon Blanc and a sumptuous Cinépolis Private Label chocolate bar to share with your date. Seating is limited, and reservations are required. See *Deadpool* on Saturday and *The Notebook* on Sunday, 7 p.m. At, 32401 Golden Lantern, Laguna Niguel. Call, 949-373-7900; or 30632 Santa Margarita Parkway, Rancho Santa Margarita, Call, 949-835-1888 or visit cinépolisusa.com

Valentine's Day Cooking Class

Feb. 13

Savor a light lunch and beverage of choice while learning recipes laden with mood-boosting ingredients and sultry spices designed to induce sensuality. Also, Chef Shachi will share the secret behind her Chai-aphrodisiac tea. Reservations required. 11 a.m. \$30/pp. At Adya, 440 S. Anaheim Blvd., Suite 201, Anaheim. Call, 714-533-2392 or visit adyaoc.com

Laguna Beach Music Festival

Laguna Beach

Feb. 17-19

The Laguna Beach Music Festival celebrates its 21st anniversary in 2023, featuring pianist Jeremy Denk, winner of a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship and the Avery Fisher Prize, as artistic director. Jeremy 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."

Pacific Symphony: Lantern Festival Costa Mesa

Feb. 18

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bring the family and join the Pacific Symphony's annual Lantern Festival, celebrating the Year of the Tiger. The Lantern Festival, which can be traced back 2,000 years, marks the return of spring and the reunion of family. The act of lighting and appreciating lanterns is a way for people to let go of the burdens of their old selves and express their best wishes for themselves and their families for the future. Admission is FREE, but tickets are required. Due to venue capacity, admission will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the event. Though a ticket does not guarantee immediate admission, ticket holders will be given priority access. Be sure to print out all print-at-home tickets. At, Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, 615 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. Call, 714-556-2787.

Continued on page 26

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FLASH BACK

'Monkee Business'

By Randal C. Hill

In September 1965, "Variety" and the "Hollywood Reporter" ran an attention-grabbing advertisement:

Madness! Auditions. Folk and Roll Musicians – Singers for acting roles in new TV series. Running parts for four insane boys, aged 17 – 21.

From the 437 hopeful applicants, coveted roles were assigned to Mike Nesmith (22), Peter Tork (23), Mickey Dolenz (20), and Davy Jones (19).

The Monkees were created to ride the slipstream of Beatlemania and were hired to mimic the Beatles' zany antics in "A Hard Day's Night," their 1964 semi-documentary debut flick. *The Monkees'* TV plotline involved a struggling Rock quartet in search of their big break.

A well-received TV pilot was filmed in late 1965, and in early 1966 NBC-TV picked up "The Monkees" as a weekly prime-time series. The four young men then embarked on a grueling schedule of improv classes, band rehearsals, and filming. Early on, the Monkee members were limited to vocal work, with only professional session musicians providing instrumental music.

"The Monkees" half-hour show hit big when it debuted in September 1966. Tune-

smiths Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart wrote the band's first 45 (a No. 1 winner); "Last Train to Clarksville" featured a chord structure, jangly guitar lines, and vocal harmonies lifted directly from the Beatles' "Paperback Writer." The Boyce-Hart team would eventually create three more winning singles. Other professional songwriters (including Neil Diamond and Carole King) were rushed in to keep the hits flowing. The Monkees' eponymous debut album also skyrocketed to the top of the "Billboard" charts.

The Pre-Fab Four (as sneering cynics often labeled them) were off and running.

By that December, growing pressure led the Monkees to begin touring, with each member hurrying to master his instrument well enough to perform onstage. No problem, as it turned out, since, akin to the Beatles' shows, much of the music played was lost to the eardrum-piercing screams that tsunamied in nightly from the vast teenybopper audiences.

Making music was better than faking music, and the Monkee men worked hard to improve. In January 1967, a mere four months after "Clarksville" introduced them to the world, the Monkees held their first recording session as a fully functioning, self-contained band.

"The Monkees" TV show, though, was another issue entirely. By the end of the second season, the quartet had tired of the filming grind and pronounced the third-season scripts monotonous and stale. When they suggested a format change to a one-hour variety show, their idea was squelched, and the series was axed, which undoubtedly crushed countless teenage hearts.

During their two-year reign, though, when the foursome often successfully challenged the almighty Beatles, the Monkees sold more than 75 million records around the world.

Had they been just a bubblegum fantasy quartet that was never quite real, undeserving of any real respect? Not to everybody. "Vanity Fair" writer Mark Rozzo once opined, "They were a pop culture force ... They created joy and wonderment and introduced the whole realm of pop music to a huge audience of young people."

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♥ Sour — Not Sweet — Nothings ♥

By Randal C. Hill

It may seem hard to believe, but not so long ago about half of all Valentine's Day messages sent contained grotesque caricatures of the intended recipient and mean-spirited, truly hurtful notices intended to drive the knife a little deeper. Sadly, such negativity lives on to this day but now in a much different form.

By the 1840s, people in England and America were creating Valentine's Day missives of heartfelt poetry, which were often illustrated by elaborate flourishes that were mailed in quilted-paper cards bound in festive ribbons. Then improvements in the printing process and paper production heralded a boom in the sale of mass-produced valentines.

Before long, however, an unexpected sea change began to place. It started quietly, a mere ripple that gradually swelled into a tidal wave. Some pranksters had enjoyed mailing valentines that involved gentle teasing — a little joke here, a little poke there — that was meant to produce a smile. But, over time, the mood of such messages soured and slowly turned increasingly crass and, eventually, despicable. By being sent anonymously, such vitriol could easily sting with insults that would normally never be spoken to another's face.

They became known as "vinegar valentines" and were the popular evil twin of the traditional, positive gesture. Printers, of course, were delighted

with the extra revenue, as such one-penny-each products were easy to produce on cheap, flimsy sheets of paper that were then folded and sealed with a dab of wax.

In the mid-1800s, cards could be mailed without a stamp, which meant that someone receiving such cruelty would also have to pay the postage (also one penny) before reading the snarky contents. (Talk about adding insult to injury!)

Anybody, it seemed, could be considered fair game — neighbors, relatives, employers, friends and colleagues, people from all walks of life, and placement on the social hierarchy. Sometimes the sending's targeted unwanted suitors, but many others made fun of one's age, weight, looks, occupation, or marital status, as well as any number of human foibles.

One often-maligned group was the suffragettes, women attempting to secure voting rights for themselves. A suffragette might receive a vinegar valentine that claimed:

"Your vote from me you will not get

"I don't want a preaching suffragette."

But those who mailed the cards sometimes got their comeuppance, as a popular retort (assuming that the original sender could be identified) might simply be a terse but powerful threat:

"No vote, no kiss

"So, take that, fella!"

In time, people were tired of the relentless negativity, and vinegar valentines slowly disappeared, giving way to "normal" Feb. 14 cards that featured positive communication.

Today, collectors of 19th-century ephemera have little trouble in locating traditional Valentine's Day cards, but finding surviving vinegar valentines is much more difficult, as recipients back then usually burned or trashed the items right after they were read.

Regrettably, the modern-day equivalent of these valentines — messages of bullying, insults, even threats — flourishes today via any number of Internet social media sites. And isn't that a pity?

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by Robert Bruce Woodcox

Whether you want to capture your life as a memoir, autobiography, or legacy book (coffee table style), most people need some help. I am a **Best Selling local author** and **ghostwriter** and I can help you get started. (See adjacent ad on this page.) **I've ghostwritten 46 books**, was a **Pulitzer Prize nominee** (2012) and have helped more than 30 individuals and families tell their stories for children, grandchildren, friends, and for business books.

I come to you.

My process includes interviews, recording, organizing your materials, research, writing original content from your memories and editing. I am also a publisher for my clients and can design and print from one to 1,000 quality full color books for you at very reasonable rates. All of this work is done locally in Newport Beach.

This wonderful process is quite fun and is confidential. It begins by you calling me

(949-244-7880) or emailing (ighostwrite@icloud.com) to explore how we will work together, what it will cost, how long it will take and any other questions you have. Once you decide you are comfortable with me and the process, we will create an outline together to get started. From that point on, we will meet approximately twice a month to share the previous work I've completed, and to obtain new content from you. It's really that simple. We continue in that manner until the completion of the writing and editing. Generally, the process takes 4 to 6 months.

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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 13



By Randal C. Hill

'Dueling Banjos'

In the early months of 1973, the Top 10 recording artists included such hipsters as Carly Simon, Elton John, War, Steely Dan, and Roberta Flack. In their midst, though, appeared the unlikely duo of Eric Weissberg and Steve Mandell, a powerhouse instrumental duo behind the million-seller "*Dueling Banjos*," which for four straight weeks locked in the No. 2 position on the "*Billboard*" singles chart.

Eric and Steve supported themselves as session musicians, working with such leading lights as Bob Dylan, Judy Collins, and John Denver — until a request arrived one day for the pair to record a track for the upcoming Burt Reynolds movie "*Deliverance*," a horrific tale of four Atlanta businessmen who canoe down an isolated Georgia river (that's about to become dammed and made into a lake), with dangerous, churning rapids and mayhem and murder awaiting downstream.

Five minutes into the film, at a dilapidated backwoods gas station, we experience a spontaneous jam session between city slicker Drew (former stage actor Ronny Cox) and a provincial lad — apparently mute — named Lonnie (local high-schooler Billy Redden).

"*Dueling Banjos*" unfolds between the pair as a musical conversation. Lonnie, initially reti-

cent, slowly picks up the tune, tosses in a bit of "Yankee Doodle Dandy," and then, much to Drew's delight, shifts into high gear. The musical pace builds to a high-octane finish as a grinning local man dances an adlibbed jig.

Cox was a good guitarist but Redden couldn't play a note. During the filming, Billy had to wear a customized shirt that allowed a local musician named Mike Addis to play the banjo while hiding his arms in Redden's sleeves.

Weissberg and Mandell didn't write "*Dueling Banjos*." That honor went to ace instrumentalist Arthur Smith in 1954 when he composed "*Feudin' Banjos*," which he recorded later with fellow banjoist Don Reno. Smith's original work — a forerunner of the rapid-fire Rock 'N Roll instrumental — was appropriately named because the track was just that: an argument of sorts between two banjos. (1973 hit single, though, featured not two banjos but a banjo and a guitar.)

"*Dueling Banjos*" on Warner Records rose next to the top of the "*Billboard Hot 100*" and reached No. 5 on the Country charts. Its placement in the latter might have been the impetus that helped Eric and Steve garner a Grammy Award for Best Country Instrumental Performance the following year.

But not everybody appreciated the success of "*Dueling Banjos*." Arthur Smith had not permitted the usage of his creation nor the credit for writing the hit. (Eric Weissberg was listed as the sole creator.) Smith filed a lawsuit, which was settled two years later in his favor when he received the abundant royalties that were due him. (Just how abundant? The first thing Arthur purchased was a 42-foot yacht.)

Smith's creation was parodied when comedian Martin Mull released his instrumental argument called "*Dueling Tubas*." The silly single sold enough copies to send it soaring to No. 92 on the Hot 100 chart.

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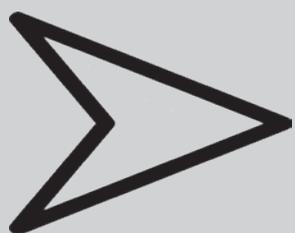
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In The Spotlight

Katharina Reekmans Talks Taxes and Filing for Seniors

Yes, it's that time again that many of us dread: tax season. Whether you work for yourself or a company, are retired, or are self-employed, you're sure to have some questions.

Individuals who are 65 years old, or older, are considered Seniors in the state of California, according to the Social Security Administration (SSA), where these groups of people in the state can then access supplemental security income (SSI), as well as people of any age who are blind or have disabilities.

Thanks to Katharina Reekmans, an Enrolled Agent and Tax Analyst things might be easier this year.

Senior Reporter: *Are you a CPA and how many years in the business?*

A: *I am an Enrolled Agent, like an attorney or a CPA. I have unlimited practice rights before the IRS, with roughly 10 years of experience in the tax industry.*

Q: Is it better to do my taxes as a senior with a professional CPA or is Turbo Tax just as good?

A: TurboTax Live allows you to connect with a tax expert who has an average of 12 years of experience so you can fully



hand your taxes over from the comfort of your home.

Q: I entered into a reverse mortgage arrangement with my bank. Are the proceeds of this loan taxable to me?

A: No, reverse mortgage payments aren't considered taxable. Reverse mortgage payments are considered loan proceeds, not income. The lender (bank) pays you (the borrower) loan proceeds while you continue to live in your home.

Q: I exercised my right to receive life insurance distributions before death. Are these proceeds taxable?

A: If you choose to withdraw money from your life insurance policy before death, the money will be first taken from your basis (the amount you've paid into the cash value through your premiums). The money from your basis is tax-free because it is a re-

turn of your basis. For example, if your life insurance has a cash value of \$60,000 and \$40,000 is your basis – you can withdraw \$40,000 tax-free. But any withdrawals exceeding that \$40,000 would tap into your earnings portion of the life insurance plan and would be subject to taxes on the gains at your regular income tax rate.

Q: When do seniors have to file taxes? If a senior's sole source of income is social security, they do not need to file a tax return. If they are married, then this must be true for both spouses.

A: If Social Security benefits are your only source of income, your benefits are typically not taxable. One way to determine this is to add one-half of your Social Security benefits to all your other income, including tax-exempt interest. If this amount is greater than the base amount for your filing status, a part of your benefits will be considered taxable. The base amounts are \$25,000 for a single taxpayer or \$32,000 for those married filing jointly. If you're married and filing a joint federal tax return, you and your spouse must combine your income and Social Security benefits when figuring out the taxable portion of

your benefits. If your spouse didn't receive any Social Security benefits, you must still add your spouse's income with yours when figuring on a joint return if any of your benefits will be considered taxable.

Q: Is this correct in terms of taxable income for seniors?

A: Investments – Investment income such as capital gains and dividends are fully taxable the same as if you are employed or retired.

Interest, dividends, and capital gains are also sources of taxable income for senior citizens. Taxable income does not include tax-free interest from municipal bonds.

Wages: Yes, even if you are receiving Social Security benefits your wages are subject to withholdings for income tax, social security tax, and Medicare tax.

If a taxpayer is over 65 and still working in a wage-paying job, the earnings from that position will be taxable. Note that wages earned after age 65 are still subject to social security and Medicare withholding.

Social Security: The taxability of social security income depends on the taxpayer's total income. As a taxpayer's

non-social security income rises, the amount of social security income that is included in taxable income increases. See the section below on determining how much your social security income should be included in your taxable income.

Other Income: Other income for seniors may include income from partnerships or other closely held businesses, rental income, royalties, or other business income.

Non-taxable income: Non-taxable income for seniors includes municipal bond interest, life insurance proceeds, and certain government benefits such as TANF or housing assistance.

Q: Is Social Security taxable income for seniors?

A: You must pay taxes on up to 85% of your Social Security benefits if you file a federal tax return as a single taxpayer if your "combined income" exceeds \$25,000 OR if you are married filing jointly and you and your spouse have "combined income" of more than \$32,000. If you are married and file separately from your spouse, you likely will have to pay taxes on your benefits.

Q: Tax credits for seniors: If you are a taxpayer over age 65 or permanently disabled, you

Continued on page 26

February Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 1. Carry on, as war
- 5. Go at _____ speed (zoom along)
- 9. Colorful talker
- 14. Made a great impression
- 15. Fanboy's fave, perhaps
- 16. Island that is part of 18-D
- 17. Rapper/tapper?
- 20. TV's Mork and ALF, for 2
- 21. Sounding all stuffed up
- 22. Impetuously utter
- 23. Help in the wrong way
- 25. Ready-fire connector
- 28. Siri runs on it
- 29. Dunderhead
- 31. "Muscle"
- 33. 23-D, e.g.
- 34. Veteran sailor
- 35. Filler of many positions
- 38. Don't bring them to gunfights
- 39. Severely injures
- 40. Innovative thoughts
- 41. Jeans and khakis
- 42. Miracle-_____
- 45. One of many to be connected
- 46. Slight car mishap
- 47. Ready for bed
- 49. Fall flower
- 52. House where 100 deliberate
- 53. Handy person to have on call
- 57. Actor Alan or Adam
- 58. Go fast
- 59. Capone's pursuer
- 60. Sptizes lightly
- 61. Trade show
- 62. "Como _____ usted?"

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
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- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57. Actor Alan or Adam 58. Go fast 59. Capone's pursuer 60. Sptizes lightly 61. Trade show 62. "Como _____ usted?" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. They're worth 2 points in the NHL 6. Do sums 7. Fishing pole 8. Mercury or Saturn 9. They're big at the Golden Arches 10. It's measured in square units 11. "With honor," on a diploma 12. Attorneys' org. 13. Pallid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Netherlands _____ (island group) 19. ____ King Cole 23. Isn't wrong? 24. Terrifying person 26. Marty's role in "Young Frankenstein" 27. Where Rangers play in NYC 30. Speaker's place 31. Truck driver 32. Makes bales of grass |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33. Hindu god of destruction 34. Use a letter opener 35. Edit menu option 36. Men's neckwear pins 37. Hungry feeling 38. Pull one's leg 41. Skull-and-crossbones sort 42. A or B, but not AB 43. Do-over requested by a failing student 44. "The _____ File" 46. With 53-D, major hip-hop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48. Ludicrous 50. SNL staple 51. Shipping units 52. Houston baseballer, familiarly 53. See 46-D 54. Flesicher, _____ Gold or Shapiro 55. _____ Luthor 56. Once around the block | |

Answers on Page 24

Tell Your Life Story...

Continued from page 10

Or...

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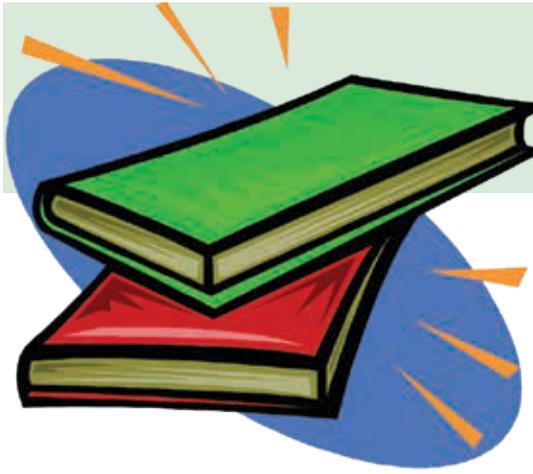


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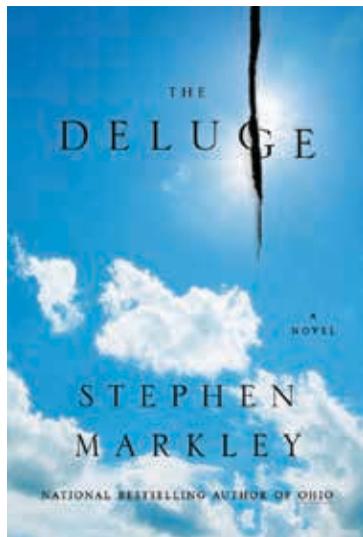
February Book Club

Check out these new books to keep you busy when you're sitting inside around the fire and away from the outside elements.

There's so much to choose from that you might want to get all of them by downloading them on your eReader or heading out to a bookshop form at your local bookshop.

The Deluge

By Stephen Markley



“In the first decades of the 21st century, the world is convulsing, its governments mired in gridlock while a patient but an unrelenting ecological crisis looms. America is in upheaval, battered by violent weather and extreme politics. In California in 2013, Tony Pietrus, a scientist studying deposits of undersea methane, receives a death threat. His fate will become bound to a stunning cast

of characters — a broken drug addict, a star advertising strategist, a neurodivergent mathematician, a cunning eco-terrorist, an actor turned religious zealot, and a brazen young activist named Kate Morris, who, in the mountains of Wyoming, begins a project that will alter the course of the decades to come.

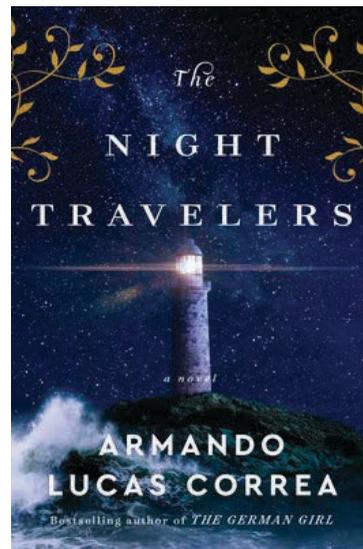
“From the Gulf Coast to Los Angeles, the Midwest to Washington, D.C., their intertwined odysseys unfold against a stark backdrop of accelerating chaos as they summon courage, galvanize a nation, fall to their fear, and find wild hope in the face of staggering odds. As their stories hurtle toward a spectacular climax, each faces a reckoning: what will they sacrifice to salvage humanity's last chance at a future? A singular achievement, *'The Deluge'* is a once-in-a-generation novel that meets the moment as few works of art ever have. Simon and Schuster”

The Night Travelers

A Novel

By Armando Lucas Correa

“Berlin, 1931: Ally Keller, a talented young poet, is alone and scared when she gives birth to a mixed-race daughter, she names Lilith. As the Nazis rise to power, Ally knows she must keep her baby in the shadows to protect her against Hitler's



deadly ideology of Aryan purity. But as she grows, it becomes more and more difficult to keep Lilith hidden so Ally sets in motion a dangerous and desperate plan to send her daughter across the ocean to safety.

“Havana, 1958: Now an adult, Lilith has few memories of her mother or her childhood in Germany. Besides, she's too excited for her future with her beloved Martin, a Cuban pilot with strong ties to the Batista government. But as the flames of revolution ignite, Lilith and her newborn daughter, Nadine, find themselves at a terrifying crossroads.

“Berlin, 1988: As a scientist in Berlin, Nadine is dedicated to ensuring the dignity of the remains of all those who were murdered by the Nazis. Yet she has spent her entire life avoiding the truth about her own family's history. It takes her daughter, Luna, to encourage Nadine to uncover the truth about the choices her mother and grandmother made to en-

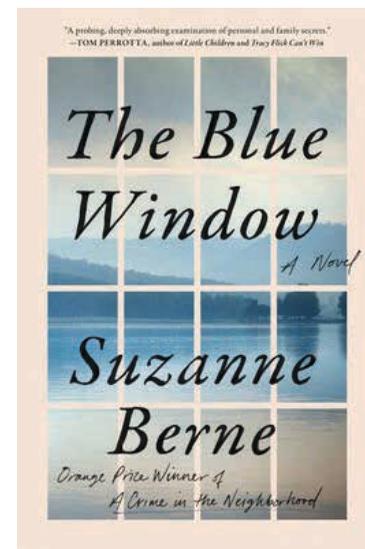
sure their children's survival. And it will fall to Luna to come to terms with a shocking betrayal that changes everything she thought she knew about her family's past.

“Separated by time but united by sacrifice, four women embark on journeys of self-discovery and find themselves to be living testaments to the power of motherly love,” according to Publisher Atria Books.

The Blue Window

A Novel

By Suzanne Berne



“Secrets abound in Lorna's family. Her mother Marika, who survived the Nazi occupation of Holland, abandoned the family when Lorna and her brother Wade were just seven and 12. The reason she left, and her whereabouts afterward, were shrouded in mystery. As is a darker secret Marika has repressed for nearly seventy years.

“Now that Lorna, a respected psychotherapist, has a child

of her own, she's determined to make Marika a part of their lives. But it's been a struggle for nearly two decades. Lorna's son Adam is creative, passionate, and uncomfortable in his skin. Three weeks before the story opens, he abruptly returns home from college after an incident that he refuses to discuss. And he refuses to be called by his name. He refers to himself as 'A' for 'anti-matter' and insists that Lorna do the same.

“The more Lorna tries to get Adam to talk, the more he withdraws. So, when she gets the call that Marika has had a fall and is incapacitated, she sees an opportunity to bond with Adam on the long drive north to Vermont, and to reconnect with her mother by nursing her back to health.

“But how do you care for people you can't understand, and who don't want to be understood? As Lorna confronts this question, she must face secrets of her own, which she has tried to ignore by spending her life analyzing other people.

“A deft and compelling exploration of family dynamics infused with suspense, *Blue Window* shows what happens to people who hide from themselves — and the act of imagination it takes to find them,” according to Publisher Scribner/Marysue Rucci Books.

Continued on page 22

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H5433_23AD013_M (Accepted 10/4/2022)

CalOptima Health, A Public Agency

Healthy Smiles

Supplement Your Dental Care Routine

Brushing and flossing are the main tricks of the trade for maintaining a healthy smile, but if you want to expand your dental health from the inside out, you may want to consider nutritional supplements.

“Most people can obtain all the necessary vitamins and minerals from a balanced diet, but for some, supplements can be helpful as nutrition deficiencies can lead to conditions such as inflammation and tooth loss if left untreated for too long,” said Kiran Malhi, DMD, a dental consultant for Delta Dental of Washington.

Six Suggestions For A Stronger Smile

In tandem with brushing, flossing and consistent trips to the dentist, these six supplements can jump start an even healthier smile:

Calcium: Calcium helps more than just your bones—it can help your teeth too. While calcium is found in dairy products, fish, vegetables and nuts, you can also take calcium as a supplement if you have roadblocks to accessing calcium-rich foods.

Phosphorus: Phosphorus aids

in calcium absorption into the body, helping to strengthen teeth by protecting and rebuilding tooth enamel. Many people get enough phosphorus in their diets through meat, fish, milk and whole grains, but it is available in supplement form for those with dietary restrictions.

Vitamin A: Vitamin A helps in saliva production, which is beneficial to your overall oral health. Saliva functions in breaking down foods and cleans bacteria between teeth. The vitamin is found in orange-colored fruits and vegetables, fish and eggs. Vitamin A tablets and gummies are widely



You can help keep your smile shining, even when your diet isn't adequate, by taking vitamin and mineral supplements as you need them.

available and also keep eyes and skin healthy.

Vitamin C: Vitamin C helps your gums as well as your teeth, keeping connective tissues in the gums strong to hold teeth in place while deficiencies in vitamin C can be the cause of bleeding gums and gum disease. Chewable or liquid forms

of vitamin C are erosive, however, and can cause the loss of enamel if taken in excess, though they're safe at the recommended dosage. Vitamin C is present in many fruits and vegetables.

Vitamin D: Vitamin D protects against oral health conditions such as gingival inflammation, cavities and gum disease, as it plays a significant role in tooth mineralization. Like calcium, vitamin D can be found in fish or vitamin D-fortified foods like milk and cereal, but for convenience, it is available in supplement form.

Zinc: Zinc can eliminate cavi-

Continued on page 22

Robert Downey Jr. — A Rollercoaster Life

By Les Goldberg

To say that acclaimed actor Robert Downey Jr. has experienced both the ups and downs of life in his 57 years would be an understatement.

His career has gone from success as a child actor and star in teen films like *"Weird Science,"* to drug addiction and legal troubles, and back to climbing the Hollywood ladder, culminating with starring roles in blockbuster films like *"Iron Man," "The Avengers," "Sherlock Holmes," "Spider-Man," "Captain America"* and others.

Like many of us, Downey's childhood was the result of his parents' upbringing. In his case, his father, an actor, and filmmaker in Manhattan was a drug addict who allowed his son to use marijuana at age six.

Downey later stated that drug use became an emotional bond between him and his father. "When my dad and I would do drugs together, it was like him trying to express his love for

me in the only way he knew how."

Eventually, Downey began spending every night abusing alcohol and "making a thousand phone calls in pursuit of drugs."

Because of his father's career, however, young Downey was able to obtain minor roles in his father's films. At age five, he made his acting debut playing a sick puppy in the comedy *"Pound."* Two years later he appeared in the surrealist western, *"Greaser's Palace."*

At that age, he was living in England and studying classical ballet. As a teenager, he attended the Stagedoor Manor Performing Arts Training Center in upstate New York. While there, his parents got a divorce, he moved to California with his father. Four years later, in 1982, he dropped out of Santa Monica High School, moved back to New York, and, continued to pursue his acting career. His roommate for a while was his good friend, Kiefer Sutherland.

After a short-lived stint on off-Broadway and a

less-than-successful run on *"Saturday Night Live,"* Downey appeared in some coming-of-age films, i.e.: *"The Pickup Artist"* in 1987, and became associated with the young actors known as the *"Brat Pack."*

It was that same year that the *"New York Times"* gave him a rave review for his role in *"Less than Zero,"* a story about a drug-addicted rich boy whose life spiraled out of control. Downey described his part as "the ghost of Christmas future."

However, it propelled him to a higher level in his career, as he was cast in films with bigger budgets and stars, such as *"Chances Are"* with Cybil Shepherd and Ryan O'Neal, *"Air America"* with Mel Gibson, and *"Soapdish"* with Sally Field, Kevin Kline, and Whoopi Goldberg.

In 1992, his starring role as Charlie Chaplin in *"Chaplin"* earned him an Oscar nomination as best actor. Downey's

name would then be on the marquee of *"Heart and Souls," "Short Cuts," "The Last Party," "Only You," "Natural Born Killers," "Restoration," "Richard III," "Home for the Holidays," "Two Girls and a Guy," "U.S. Marshals"* and *"Black and White."*

The Setbacks

Despite his success through the 1990s, Downey's renewed drug habit landed him in jail, rehab, and legal entanglements. He was arrested several times for drug-related charges. In 1996, he was charged with possession of heroin, cocaine, and an unloaded .357 Magnum handgun while speeding down Sunset Boulevard.

His continued brushes with the law resulted in a three-year prison term in a California state correctional facility. The sentence was cut short when a judge ruled that his collective time in incarceration qualified him for early release in 2000.

A week later Downey joined the cast of the hit TV series *"Ally McBeal,"* playing a new

love interest and his performance earned him a Golden Globe Award for best supporting actor.

However, despite his renewed success, he regressed and spent the next five years in and out of rehab and courtrooms. Finally, while on parole, he resumed his acting career, appearing in several films, including *"Air America," "The Singing Detective," "Gothika," "Kiss Bang Bang"* and others.

Downey, his career reached its peak in 2007 when he was cast as the title character in *"Iron Man,"* the multi-million-dollar movie franchise. The film's director, Jon Favreau, stated at the time that "Downey would be to *'Iron Man'* what Johnny Depp is to the *'Pirates of the Caribbean,'* a leading actor who could both elevate the quality of the film and increase the public's interest."

Downey, who currently is involved in supporting the climate crisis movement, has been

Continued on page 19



Off the Beaten Path: Yosemite National Park 'Most Instagrammable' Tourist Attraction in CA

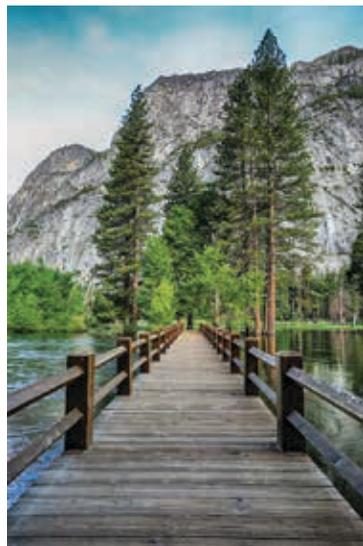
New data reveals the most Instagrammable tourist attractions in California with Yosemite National Park taking the top spot.

The research conducted by "Family Destinations Guide" analyzed Instagram hashtag data to determine which tourist hotspot in California was the most popular online.

Yosemite National Park took the top spot in the findings. There are 4.8 million posts under Yosemite-related hashtags on Instagram, more than any other attraction in the state. Famous for its stunning waterfalls and monoliths, Yosemite National Park reports over 4 million visitors per year.

The second most Instagrammable tourist destination in California is Venice Beach. The beach has 4.4 million posts under the hashtag. Based in Los Angeles and with almost three miles of coastline, Venice Beach welcomes almost 30,000 people each day.

The Golden Gate Bridge ranks third with 4.3 million posts under the Golden Gate Bridge hashtag. The icon of the San



Francisco landscape stands 746 feet tall and sees more than 10 million visitors a year.

In fourth place is Lake Tahoe. The lake straddles the state lines between California and Nevada and is the largest alpine lake in North America. There are 2.81 million posts under Lake Tahoe-related hashtags.

Rounding out the top five is Disneyland Park, based in Anaheim. Famous for being the very first Disney theme park when it opened in 1955, Disneyland Park has 2.46 million posts on Instagram.

Commenting on the findings, a spokesperson from "Family

Continued on page 22

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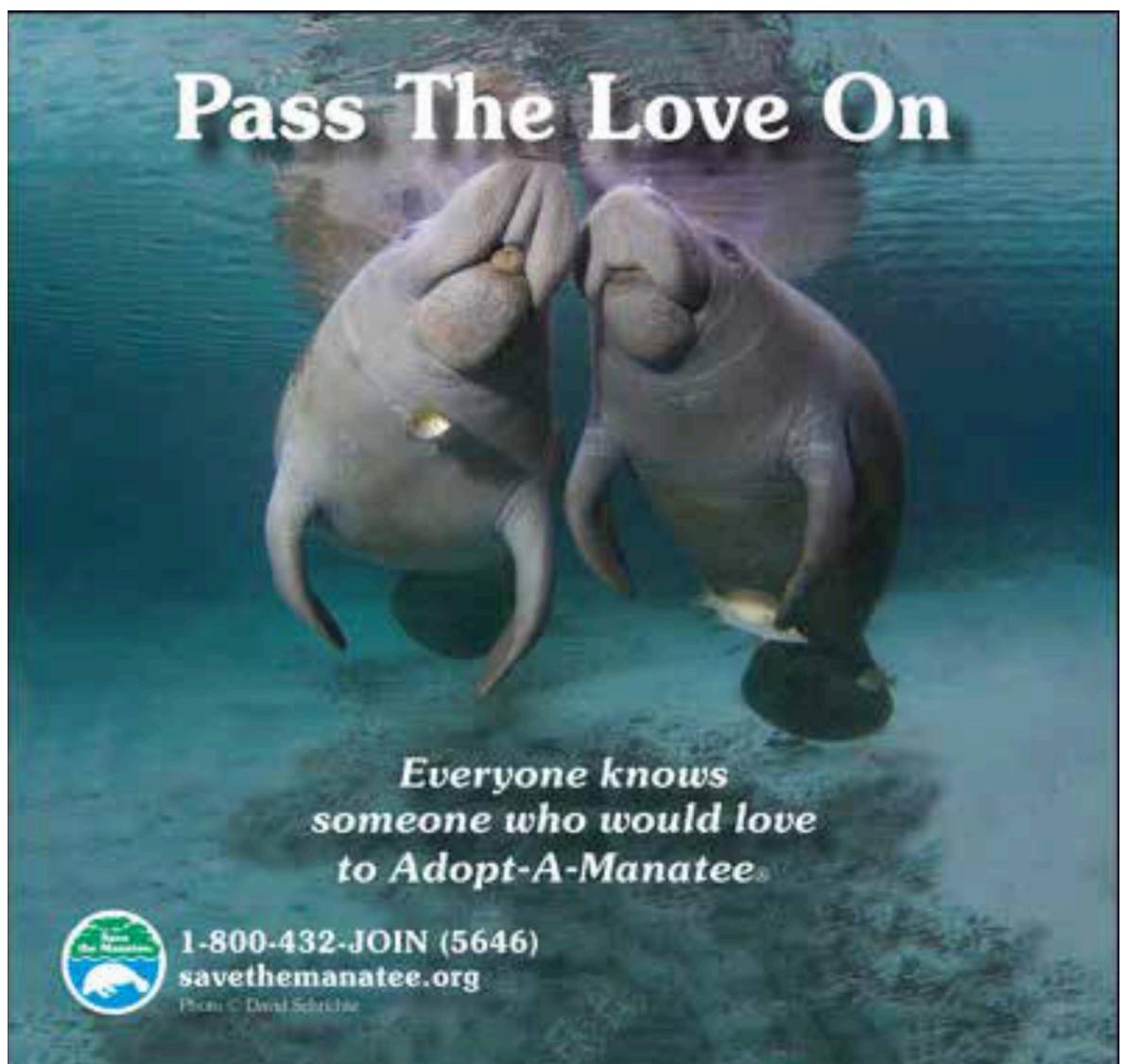
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On The Road Again

Snowbirds of a Different Feather

By Shana McCann

Southern California, known for its all-season sunshine and beach-like weather, has been a favorite destination of “snowbirds” for decades. Seniors like my late rich uncle from the frigid Canadian plains traveled south every year to spend their entire winters soaking up the sun.

Today, however, there is a different kind of snowbird. And you will find them on the slopes of the local ski resorts just a couple of hours away from the metropolitan area.

According to the National Ski Areas Association, the number of skiers over 65 was a record 10.5 million last year, an all-time high. Why the increase?

One reason, said Nicholas Herrin, CEO of the Professional Ski Instructors of America, is the “advances in technology, including improved equipment designs and materials, increased snowmaking and better grooming. Together they have made skiing and snowboarding more accessible to everyone, including senior skiers.”

Also, studies reveal that the sheer volume of “Baby Boomers” is a contributing factor. In the U.S., the Boomer population is more than 70 million. Obviously, not all are skiers, but their love of the sport overcomes their diminished skills



enough to have fun at their favorite ski resorts.

Said Alan Glazer, 81, who has been skiing since he was 12, “senior skiers have more free time available to enjoy outdoor activities. Financial concerns of raising a family and being tied to careers may be reduced following retirement.”

So, if you are a local and an avid, moderate, or beginning skier, your “white-powdered playground” is a few miles away. The most popular are:

Bear Mountain

Open until April 16, The Big Bear Mountain Resort offers skiers of all ages ample steep terrain along with the only “superpipe” and highest lift-served peak in Southern California.

A major attraction is the town of Big Bear Lake with an array of lodging, restaurants, and nightlife.

Snow Summit

Snow Summit is known for its family-friendly atmosphere, regular night skiing, and extensive snowmaking to keep its trails open.

While it offers excellent skiing

options, only 10 percent of the trails are dedicated to beginners. However, whether you’re a high-level or novice skier, you can enjoy the many eateries at the top of the mountain.

Mountain High

This destination is most popular with families with kids, and skiers of all ability levels, but lacks very steep slopes needed for experts.



It does offer a fun area, known as Yeti’s Snow Parks, where the kids flock for tubing and sledding. The only drawback to Mountain High is the lower snowmaking capacity.

For the best accommodations, the town of Wrightwood is next door.

Mammoth Mountain

Mammoth Mountain is one of California’s biggest ski areas, is the furthest (318 miles) from the Greater Los Angeles area, and has one of the longest seasons in North America – closing May 29!

Frequent visitors will tell you that Mammoth is great for families of all ability levels as well as non-skiers who enjoy



a wide range of winter recreation, including tubing, snowmobiling, gondola rides, and snowcat tours.

A wide array of lodging and dining choices are available on the base of the mountain and at Mammoth Lakes.

Snow Valley

If you’re only planning a day trip, Snow Valley is ideal. Why? Because lodging is scarce and snow conditions tend to vary at the lower elevation in the San Bernardino National Forest.

The good news is that it provides an ideal place for beginners and offers laid-back skiing all day and on Friday and Saturday nights.

Senior Safety

Mike Roth, a senior skier who writes for a website, www.seniorsskiing.com, offers this warning:

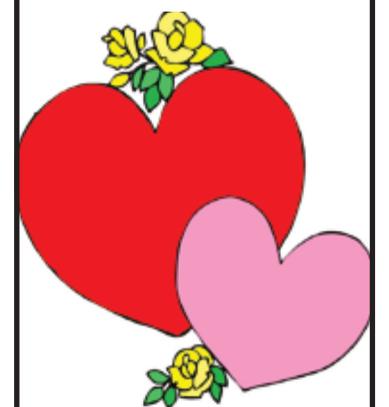
“As a senior, I worry about falling, but even more about being ‘taken out’ by a reckless skier or snowboarder.”

What he is telling us is to keep

an eye out on the slopes, just as you would while driving a car, riding a bike, or a scooter.

And, with this season’s record snowfall in our mountains, expect to be joined in your skiing adventures with big crowds. Be prepared.

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The Gadget Geezer

By Les Goldberg

Shine Returns to the ‘Big Show’

After a three-year pandemic-induced hiatus, this country’s biggest technology showcase, CES, came back to life last month with a flurry of new products and almost-ready-for-primetime innovations.

The excitement among the more than 100,000 visitors and 3,000 exhibitors was obvious from the minute the gates opened at the Las Vegas Convention Center and nearby hotels. It started at the main entrance where the CES Innovation winners were on full display.

Among the products considered by the show’s esteemed panel of judges to incorporate the latest technological advancements and worthy of the prestigious honor are highlighted here. We’ll take a look at some of the others in the months ahead, but let’s start with some of the more notable: (Prices are yet to be determined).

BrailleWear



BrailleWear by ORama AI (Artificial Intelligence) is a smart glove designed to help visually impaired people learn braille faster, independently, and at a signifi-

cantly lower cost than traditional methods, such as hiring a tutor.

According to the developers, the smartglove, with its built-in sensors and advanced AI software, can “convert any type of braille to speech in real time” to provide added speed and ease of use to the learning process.

“A user can feel braille dots with their exposed fingers and hear their audio translation simultaneously,” they added, “helping them associate the feel to each character directly.”

Milo



Goodbye walkie-talkies, hello **Milo**, billed as the “action communicator.”

Loose Cannon Systems launched Milo, a wearable hands-free voice radio that is designed to replace the traditional walkie-talkie by creating a customized network with your friends, relatives, co-workers, teammates, and others.

The phone-free system, using a mesh network, can accommodate up to 16 people communicating with each other – with a range of 2,000 feet between any two participants.

Each Milo device has six microphones, a speaker, and multiple radios to ensure high-quality communications. Milo works with a Bluetooth headset or can be plugged into any headset. No Wi-Fi or cellphone signal is needed.

Dream X10 Ultra



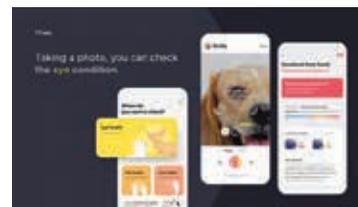
The newest entry into the robotic vacuum cleaner market is an award winner. The **Dream X10 Ultra** is still in prototype stages but promises to distinguish itself with its advanced features, such as a laser rangefinder, AI, a camera, 3D lasers, and a suction power of 6,000 Pa.

Unlike competitive systems, i.e.: iRobot and Roborock, the Dream X10 Ultra can automatically replace its two rotating mops. It also raises and lowers its pads to carpet and floor thicknesses to avoid unnecessary soaking.

Also totally automatic are dust box emptying, mop cleaning and drying, and water and cleaning solution adding. The product is compatible with Google Assistant, Alexa, and Siri.

Pets T!care

For the second year in a row, AI for **Pet’s T!care** is a CES Innovations winner as a diagnostic app for your pet.



The Korean company says its new software is a medical device in itself. “It means it offers and performs more medical functions, such as diagnosing, mitigating or preventing diseases without the need for hardware.”

With the use of a smartphone, the user can take a picture of their pet’s eyes or body parts and the app will then notify the owner whether or not their pets have potential skin or eye-related symptoms. The diagnostic features also include instructions on how to provide proper care for their pets in particular situations.

Arges



Arges smart glasses are touted as the ideal solution for people who suffer from age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss.

Using a small 4k camera and a mobile app, the glasses can capture and process images in real-time, then display them back to the wearer with augmented reality display in full high definition.

According to the Cellico, the Arges developers, this process moves the central vision to the peripheral

field of view, allowing the wearers to recover their lost vision and regain independence.

Additionally, using voice commands, users can zoom in or out on the video. Other features include a liquid crystal polymer film on the lenses that electronically adjusts the tint level to reduce the sun’s brightness.

My Conclusion

Pretty neat, huh?

Robert Downey, Jr.

Continued from page 16

pardoned by former California Gov. Jerry Brown for his prior drug convictions. During an appearance on “*The Oprah Winfrey Show*,” he said, “It’s really not that difficult to overcome these seemingly ghastly problems. What’s hard is to decide to do it.”



Fabulous Finds

By Debbie L. Sklar

February is a great time to experiment with the latest and greatest **Fab Finds** to make yourself look new, refreshed, and rejuvenated.

Here are some of the best new products from skincare creams to oils to get you in tip-top shape.

For Men



ASSEMBLED Skincare is a premium men's skincare brand that was created to bring the highest-quality and multi-functional products to the men's skincare industry.

Assembled Skincare is centered around a simple daily skincare routine with clean, premium quality, and effective ingredients that deliver better-looking and healthier skin.

All products are free of additives, such as sulfates, parabens, fragrances, silicones, waxes, and other fillers that may be harmful to the skin. The product formulations are specifically designed to direct high-quality active ingredients, including vitamin C, retinol, salicylic acid, and other ingredients to the correct layers of

the skin where they can deliver results. All of the ingredients and products from ASSEMBLED Skincare are certified vegan and cruelty-free.

While the focus at Assembled Skincare is to help men maintain healthy skin, the company also believes in environmental stewardship and caring for the planet. With this goal, they do not use any pump dispensers or single-use plastics which cannot be recycled. The entire product line and all packaging were crafted to be eco-friendly and 100% recyclable from the start.

This simple skin care regimen from ASSEMBLED Skincare includes a moisturizer for both day and night use, an eye cream to eliminate puffy eyes and dark circles, exfoliating and anti-aging face wipes, and a toner/aftershave that hydrates and soothes skin. Additionally, all products are formulated to be used for any skin type. Assembled also has two face wash options, with one specifically designed to target oily skin and reduce breakouts. Visit assembledskincare.com

CACAYE Products

The innovative lab fermentation process, coupled with CACAY oil, energizes CACAYE products to awaken the most potent ingredients possible.

At the heart of all CACAYE



products is CACAYE – a precious nut oil native to the Amazon that is rich in essential fatty acids and vitamins, making it a true skincare powerhouse and cure-all. Applied daily, CACAYE Oil has a variety of

benefits including components that improve the appearance of lines, wrinkles, tone, dehydration, dark spots, irritation, and sensitivity without an oily or sticky finish.

Through the power of fermentation, a natural process that breaks down botanicals for maximum potency and absorption, CACAYE products activate natural botanicals, producing higher vibration blends with a richer concentration of skin-feeding nutrients and amino acids. CACAYE's unique synthesis of CACAYE Oil plus fermented formulas allows the products to be easily absorbed into the skin for maximum efficacy, helping to purify and condition your skin's microbiome – an invisible protective shield that helps defend from the aging effects of environmental aggressors.

The initial CACAYE collection features three core products, developed to deliver effective results through clean and uncompromising high-performance formulas:

CACAYE+C FERMENTED CLEANSING OIL (\$42):

A gentle cleansing oil that breaks down impurities and dissolves makeup without a greasy feel. Ingredients include PurFerm Extract and CitraC 3 Complex which help to improve elasticity, soften wrinkles and promote radiant skin.

SUPERFRUIT-FERMENTED RENEWAL CREAM (\$65):

Fermented moisturizing gel cream with FermeFruit and ReVita-D strengthens and protects for 24 hours while reducing the look of fine, dry lines.

CACAYE+C FERMENTED BRIGHTENING OIL (\$75):

A luxurious lightweight oil that brightens, firms, and hydrates skin. With the help of PurFerm Extract and CitraC 3 Complex, this facial oil improves elasticity and softens wrinkles, increasing the radiance of skin and providing antioxidant protection. Visit cacaye.com.

Long-lasting Liquid Lipstick

KVD Beauty announces a new collection of liquid lipsticks sure to be their next cult classic. Introducing **Everlasting Hyperlight Liquid Lipstick**, a next-generation, long-lasting, transfer-proof formula set to replace the original collection, Everlasting Liquid Lipstick. KVD Beauty Introduces New Everlasting Hyperlight Liquid Lipstick launching in 21 shades



Everlasting Hyperlight Liquid Lipstick lasts like a liquid lipstick but feels like vapor. The evolution of their liquid lipstick revolution, KVD Beauty took the iconic, all-day, transfer-proof wear of the brand's original formula and evolved it for an even better experience: extreme comfort and a hyper-lightweight feel. 100% of wearers said Everlasting Hyperlight Liquid Lipstick was comfortable even after 8 hours of wear (in a consumer study on 32 volunteers).

Powered by nourishing raspberry stem cells, this ultra-thin, flexible formula moves seamlessly with lips to help prevent caking, flaking, and feeling dry. This pigment-packed formula is ultra-comfortable without compromising the impactful color payoff KVD Beauty is known for.

100% vegan and cruelty-free, KVD Beauty's Everlasting Hyperlight Liquid Lipstick (\$22) is now available online at

Continued on page 29

Tinseltown Talks

By Nick Thomas

Adrienne Barbeau from Musicals to Monsters

Before “Grease,” the hit 1978 movie, there was “Grease” the musical theater production that first performed in Chicago in 1971 before moving to Broadway a year later for over 3,000 performances.

Adrienne Barbeau, who played Rizzo during the first five months of the show’s run, helped commemorate the 50th anniversary of the production as a co-editor of the 2022 book: “Grease, Tell Me More, Tell Me More - Stories from the Broadway Phenomenon That Started It All.” It features personal anecdotes from the Broadway cast and crew.

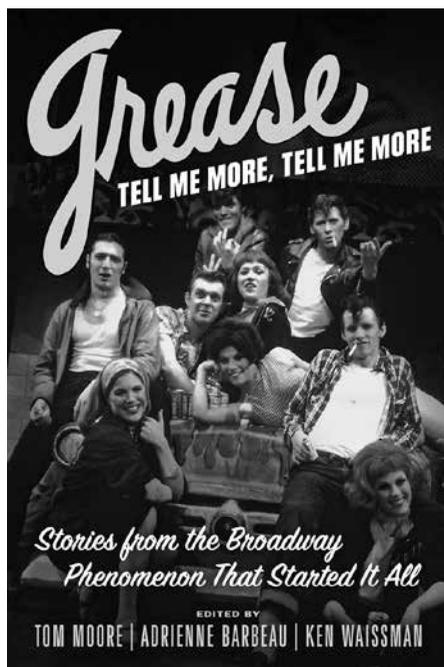


A scene from the original New York production of “Grease,” Adrienne Barbeau in center. Photo courtesy book publisher.

“It stemmed from a Zoom meeting that the original cast had when the pandemic first shut everything down,” recalled Barbeau from her home in Los Angeles.

“The stories everybody told were just so delightful and touching and funny and most of them were all new to me because I left the show early on.”

Barbeau and two others in-



Cover of “Grease, Tell Me More, Tell Me More, Stories from the Broadway Phenomenon That Started it All.” Photo courtesy book publisher

involved in the production began assembling the stories.

“We sent out a questionnaire to over 100 actors, musicians, and crew members who had been involved in the show asking them to write down their stories of working on the production,” Barbeau said. “We put it all together in a terrific tribute to the show.”

Despite her strong connection to “Grease” which opened on Valentine’s Day, 1972, to this day Barbeau still has not watched the popular 1978 movie version which has many differences, including some of the music, from the original play.

“I happened to hear one of the

songs from the movie a long time back, which was one of my songs,” she recalled. “It was lovely what they had done with it, but it just was not what we had done. So, I decided never to watch the film so I could keep the memory of our show and not cloud it with another version.”

Though her career began in musical theater, Barbeau left “Grease” to co-star in the TV comedy “Maude” throughout the 70s. But in the early 80s, the actress starred in several horror/sci-fi films (“Swamp Thing,” “The Fog,” “Escape from New York,” “Creepshow”) forever cementing her movie status as a horror sex symbol (see www.abarbeau.com).

“I started in musical theater and comedy, and the transition to more dramatic roles was never by design,” Barbeau explained. “It’s just that somebody offered me something I wanted to do or needed to do to pay bills. I ended up playing strong women who were not victims and they were often interesting and challenging roles.”

“People always say, ‘oh you were a sex symbol,’ she adds. “But I like to remind them my first love scene in the film was with a swamp monster!”



Adrienne Barbeau and the creature in “Swamp Thing.” Photo courtesy Embassy Pictures.

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, in Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See www.getnickt.org.

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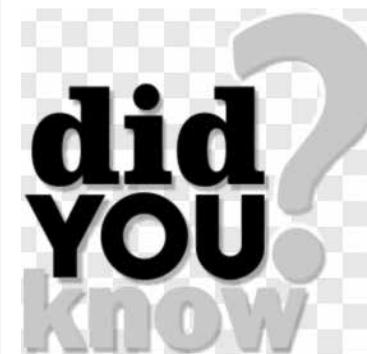
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Jim McDevitt, Lyn Jensen,
Nick Thomas, Randal C. Hill



➔ A visible pile of delivered mail and packages in front of your home is an invitation for the bad guys to help themselves. If you’ll be away for an extended period, have your mail held at the Post Office. For more tips, visit www.uspis.gov/holiday-2022.

➔ Statistics show that the incidence of home fires and electrical accidents typically increases during the winter holiday season. To combat this, the Electrical Safety Foundation International’s (ESFI) website, www.holidaysafety.org, offers a variety of free-to-share resources.

➔ A foundation that honors the sacrifices of fallen military heroes, Children of Fallen Patriots, provides college scholarships and educational counseling to military children who lost a parent in the line of duty. You can help by donating time or money. Learn how at www.fallenpatriots.org.

➔ Bad breath can be from skipping healthy oral hygiene habits or indicative of a deeper issue,” said Kyle Dosch, DDS of Delta Dental of Washington. “Combining good habits and consistent visits to the dentist will help keep halitosis away.” Learn more at www.dentadentalwa.com.

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Supplement Your Dental Care Routine

Continued from page 15

ty-causing bacteria and control demineralization. The vitamin can also help with gum diseases such as gingivitis and other common periodontal problems. A bonus is that zinc helps fight bad breath.

Learn More

For additional information about how to get and maintain a healthy smile, visit www.deltadentalwa.com/blog.

February Book Club

Continued from page 14

Regrets Only

By Kieran Scott



“Paige Lancaster, single mom, and prodigal daughter have returned to the East Coast from her prestigious, well-paid job in Los Angeles, writing for the smartest detective series on television. Something terrible happened to her back in Hollywood. Okay, two terrible things, one featuring a misplaced tire iron — and now she’s broke, homeless, and living with her widowed mother and 8-year-old daughter, Izzy, in her Connecticut hometown.

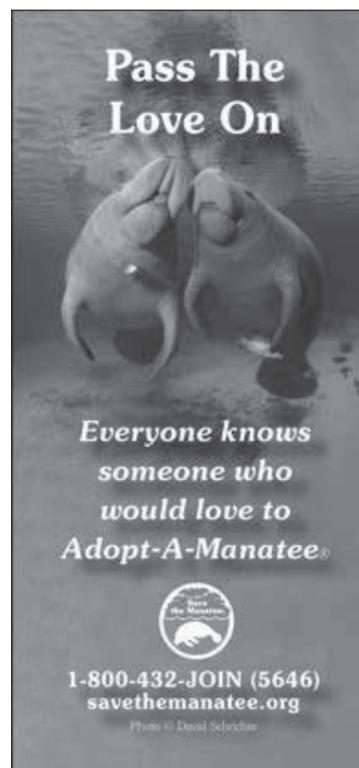
“Paige needs to buckle down and find a new writing gig but first, she meets the movers and shakers of Izzy’s school’s Parent Booster Association, run by the intimidatingly gorgeous Ainsley Anderson, who just happens to be married to Paige’s old high school flame, John.

“Then she shows up at the annual Parents and Pinot fundraiser, held at Ainsley and John’s dazzling mansion in the toniest part

of town, where she’s caught in a compromising position with John, accidentally destroys the guest bathroom, overhears an incriminating conversation, and discovers that her purse has gone missing. And later that night, Ainsley turns up dead at the bottom of her driveway.

“Did she fall? Or was she pushed?

“Paige may have only written about detectives, but she is convinced she can handle a little undercover sleuthing. After all, it’ll give her an excuse to spend more time with John. Still, she can’t help but wonder: could he be capable of murder? Or could one of the PBA members have planned a dastardly crime to reach the top? But the most important question of all: will Paige ever get her life back on track? according to Publisher Gallery Books.



Continued from page 17
Destinations Guide said: “For many, social media is an important factor when it comes to picking a vacation destination. This study offers a fascinating insight into the tourist spots in California that prove to be the most popular for social media users and it will be interesting to see if this ranking changes in 2023.”

The study was conducted by Family Destinations Guide, a site dedicated to reviewing hotels, resorts, and destinations to ensure your family has a fantastic vacation.



Busy Boomers

By Les Goldberg

Late-blooming Artists Abound

How many of you have chosen to spend your retirement years exploring various forms of artistry – like freestyle oil or watercolor painting, painting by numbers, pencil, or charcoal drawing, or even mediums such as photography and textiles?

I have. I even sold one of my macrame pot holders to an admiring fan for \$35, my first and only retail success. For most of us, however, our hobbies are just that – hobbies! We probably have no intention of profiting from the fun we have doing them.

That is why I find it extremely admirable when seniors who have led highly successful careers in non-artistic businesses and professions can pull their long-dormant creative talents out of their pockets and turn them into profitable or socially-conscious endeavors. People like:

David Freeman



One such person is David Freeman, 77, who is the former owner of a computer store. Today he is an award-winning

photographer known best for his portrayal of the homeless in Southern California.



"I have no space available for other areas," he said, "as your mind and soul get over-saturated with the realities" of the homeless. These images need to be seen as awareness is key to our community's success in solving the homeless problem."

Using the Windows Gallery in Huntington Beach and others, Freeman's work is part of an overall community effort to "make our world better."

"Our art galleries and museums have not been giving homelessness and poverty a big enough venue to shine the brightest light possible," he said.

Joan Gladstone



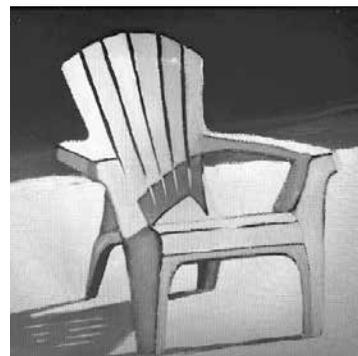
Joan Gladstone and I have been integral to the Orange County public relations scene for more than five decades. Throughout all those years, I knew her only as the owner of Gladstone International, one of the best examples of professionalism in our field. Her success shone brightest when her agency was selected to help the County of Orange emerge from bankruptcy.

Little did I know that she was a very talented painter, that she decided to retire from her PR agency in 2018 to devote her time to oil painting.

As she explained later, her intentions as a young woman were to study art at a prestigious university. When the challenges of financial resources crossed her path, she was forced to put her artistic abilities aside indefinitely.



"The big challenge was returning to painting after a long hiatus while I built my business career," she said. "I was so rusty that when I took an art class 20 years ago, I could barely remember how to mix paint. I kept going and now I'm a working artist."



Gladstone's repertoire involves contemporary oil paintings of Southern California beach scenes. "Whether the painting features Ferris wheels, surfboards, or whimsical animals, the common thread is heightened color." Her style is unique and highly recognizable, but her goal is to continue to "refine my style and apply it to subjects beyond the coast."

The Graffiti Seniors



Have you ever heard of LATA 65? Don't worry, you are not alone. I never heard of it either until researching for this column.

I find it remarkable that this group of senior citizens in Lisbon, Portugal, known as LATA 65, are being introduced to youth culture by learning how to create graffiti art throughout their neighborhoods.

According to the group leader, an 82-year-old widow known as Armando, which is a tribute to her late husband, the more

than 100 seniors in the workshop are "finding a way to bridge the gap between generations by proving that age is just a number."

"In stimulating the artistic side of the elderly, LATA 65 is not only bringing joy and motivation into the lives of Portugal's senior citizens, but it is also uplifting those that witness their vibrant creations."



Taught by well-known street artists, the seniors learn to make their stencils and create their street tags, forming bright and colorful murals in neglected and run-down neighborhoods. They are hoping the idea will catch on across the globe.

Life is what happens
when you're busy
making other plans
—Jim Lemon

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SOMETIMES MY HUMAN DOESN'T WEAR PANTS AT HOME. IT'S A RIOT.

—COLBY
adopted 06-18-11

A PERSON IS THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO A SHELTER PET

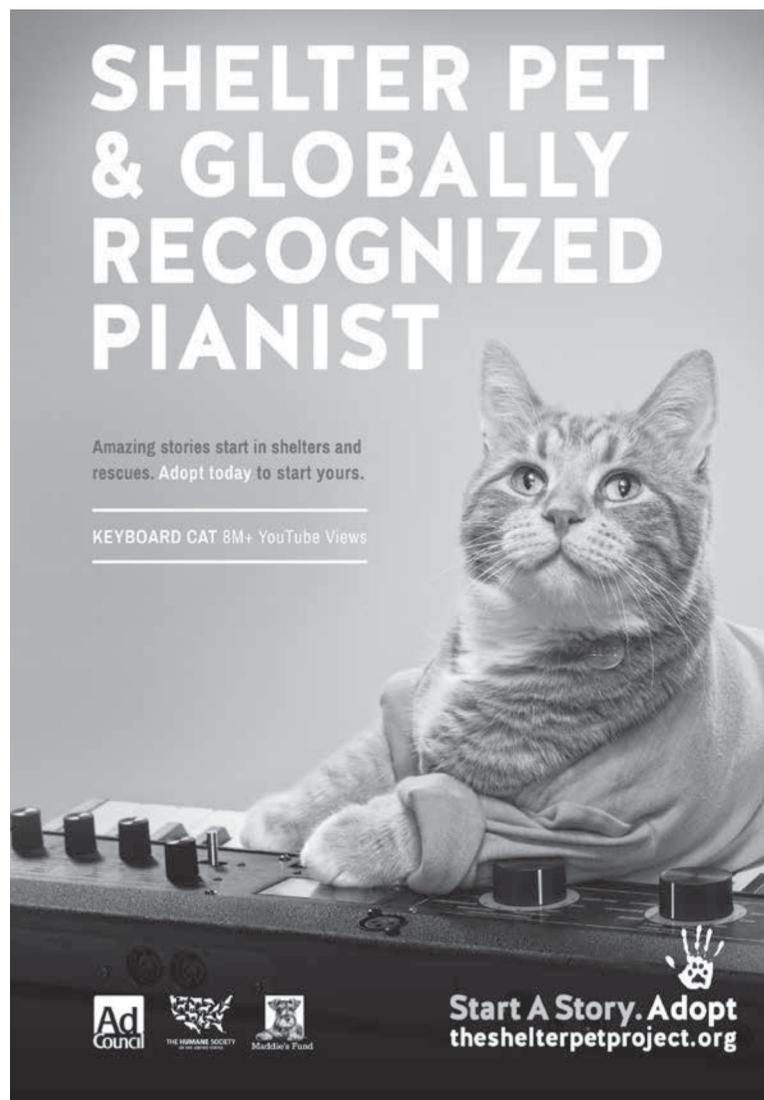
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theshelterpetproject.org

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Crossword Puzzle Answers from page 12

1	W	A	G	E	5	W	A	R	P	9	M	A	C	A	W		
14	A	P	E	D	15	I	D	O	L	16	A	R	U	B	A		
17	S	O	N	G	18	A	N	D	D	19	A	N	C	E	M	A	N
20	A	L	I	E	N	S	21	N	A	S	A	L					
22	B	L	U	R	T	23	A	B	E	T	25	A	26	I	M		
28	I	O	S	29	I	D	I	O	T	31	T	H	U	G	S		
				33	S	L	A	N	G	34	S	E	A	D	O	G	
		35	U	T	I	L	I	T	Y	37	P	L	A	Y	E	R	
38	K	N	I	V	E	S	39	M	A	I	M	S					
40	I	D	E	A	S	41	P	A	N	T	S	42	G	R	O		
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53	J	A	C	K	O	F	55	F	A	L	L	T	R	A	D	E	S
57	A	R	K	I	N	58	T	E	A	R	59	N	E	S	S		
60	M	I	S	T	S	61	E	X	P	O	62	E	S	T	A		

In The Spotlight

continued from page 11

are eligible for a tax credit of up to \$5,000. True?

A: The credit ranges between \$3,750 and \$7,500 depending on your filing status and is subject to certain income limits.

Q: Is Social Security considered gross income?

A: If the sum of half your Social Security benefits plus your adjusted gross income and your tax-exempt interest and dividends are more than \$25,000 for a single filer (or \$32,000 for those married filing jointly) part of your Social Security benefits will be included as part of your gross income.

Q: I must start receiving distributions from my IRA & 401(k) accounts. How do I determine the amount I must withdraw each year to avoid a penalty?

A: To avoid penalties, individuals who are age 72 must make required minimum distributions from their retirement plans and individual retirement arrangements. Generally, required minimum distributions (RDM) are amounts that retirement plan and IRA owners must withdraw each year after they reach age 72 or when they retire in a workplace retirement plan.

The RDM rule requires traditional IRA, SEP, SARSEP, and SIMPLE IRA account holders to take distributions at age 72 (even if they are still working). The account holder who turned

72 in 2022 must take their first RDM by April 1, 2023, and then by the second RMD by December 31, 2023, and then annually each year after.

For account holders of 401(k), 403(b), 457(b), profit-sharing, and other defined contributions plans, and defined benefit plans, the first RDM is due by April 1 of the later of the year turn 72 OR the participant is no longer employed (depending on plan rules).

Roth IRAs do not require distributions while the original owner is alive.

The RDM for any year is calculated for each account by dividing the prior December 31st balance of that IRA or retirement plan by the life expectancy factor published by the IRS. Typically, an IRA trustee or plan administrator, will either report the amount of the RMD to the IRA owner or offer to calculate it.

Q: What is the 1099-K and how does it apply to seniors who may have their businesses? What is considered “goods and services” vs. “Paying Friends and Family,” say on PayPal?

A: Form 1099-K, also called Payment Card and Third-Party Network Transactions, is used by credit card companies and third-party settlement organizations like Venmo, PayPal, and Cash App to report the payment transactions they process for retailers or other third parties. The American Rescue Plan of 2021 changed the reporting threshold for third-party

settlement organizations (TPSOs), requiring them to report transactions exceeding \$600 per year. This changed from the previous threshold of more than 200 transactions per year AND more than \$20,000 earned. However, on Dec. 23, 2022, the IRS announced that the calendar year 2022 will serve as a transition year for the reduced reporting threshold of \$600. Per the IRS, this means that for the tax year 2022, the existing 1099-K reporting threshold of \$20,000 in payments from over 200 transactions will remain in effect.

TPSOs are required to report payments for goods and services (i.e., tangible times sold to customers or task performed for benefit of a customer) and is not intended to track payments paying friends and family (i.e., money for gifts, a meal, or a payment of a bill).

This applies to seniors if they have a business that uses a third-party settlement organization to process payments for the sale of goods and services for their business.

Q: Who distributes the 1099-K?

A: 1099-Ks are issued by third-party settlement organizations.

Q: What happens if I don't report earnings from third-party payers this year?

A: If a processor issues you a 1099-K or not you should report all your income. The IRS will also receive a copy of all 1099-Ks issued to you.

Q: Are there very few write-

offs this year for taxpayers?

A: A write-off is a legitimate expense that can be claimed as a deduction and lower your taxable income. A tax write-off is also known as a tax deduction. Some common tax write-offs are mortgage interest, donations to charities, medical and dental expenses, and traditional IRA contributions. If you own and operate a business or have a self-employed income, you're allowed to write off certain expenses that are ordinary and necessary expenses related to that business such as home office deduction, supplies, and the business use of your car.

Q: Is there simply just a standard deduction for taxpayers for 2022?

A: Taxpayers can choose to take a standard deduction or itemized deduction when filing their tax returns. The standard deduction is a specific amount that you can deduct – for 2022 the standard deduction is \$12,950 for a single taxpayer or \$25,900 for married couples filing jointly. While itemized deductions are made up of a list of eligible expenses. It would only be advantageous to the taxpayer to claim an itemized deduction if a taxpayer has eligible expenses that exceed the standard deduction amount for their filing status.

Q: Are there any extra write-offs for self-employed this year?

A: Those who are self-employed by doing contract work or running their own small business are eligible for some tax deductions that can add

up to a substantial tax saving. Some deductions include business use of home, automobile expenses, educational expenses, and depreciation of property and equipment. For the first time, the IRS increased the standard mileage rate for the second half of 2022 – 58.5 cents per mile for the first 6 months of the year and 62.5 for the last 6 months of the year effective July 1, 2022.

February Calendar

Continued from page 5

Irvine Park Railroad Anniversary Celebration

Feb. 25-26



To celebrate its 27th year of business and to show appreciation to all its loyal customers Irvine Park is rolling back to their original 1996 prices during its anniversary weekend including \$2 train rides. The cost is \$2 per ticket; this price is valid during the Anniversary Celebration weekend only. Coupons, discounts, and any other promotions are not valid on the Anniversary Celebration dates. At, Irvine Regional Park, 1 Irvine Park Road, Orange. Call, 714-997-3968.

Huntington Beach Symphony Orchestra

Feb. 26

3:30 p.m.

Huntington Beach Central Library Theatre, 7111 Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach, info@hbsymphony.org. See ad on back cover for further information.



Life After Mother

By Lyn Jensen

'Exploring probate and estate issues from personal experience.'

Grave Trumped by Fairway

Recently I read news of Ivana Trump's will being in probate, which led me to wonder how one of the world's wealthiest and most prominent women either made a major blunder in the planning of her estate or was at the mercy of her family.

She did leave an orderly will, providing for her estate of \$34 million to be divided primarily between her three children, and even entrusting her dog's care to an assistant. As for the disposition of her remains, however, she either left no plans at all or simply left open the possibility that her ex-husband, former President Donald J. Trump,



Former President Donald J. Trump (he was the second of four ex-husbands), might handle things his way. For those unfamiliar with the details, he made headlines after Ivana died last year when he buried her on the grounds of his golf course in New Jersey.

Some stories went so far as to suggest state tax law may allow him a tax break (one of many tax breaks he enjoys) for having a grave on his property. Normally when a couple is divorced and one parent dies, the



decision on whether and where to have a grave would be the responsibility of any adult children. Ivana's three adult children either had nothing to do with her burial arrangements or agreed with their father to put their mother's grave near the fairway of one of his several golf courses.

How the Trump family designated Ivana's final resting place and how they're now handling the distribution of her property provides a cautionary tale in estate planning. Disposition of her finances and property appears to have been well provided for, disposition of her, not so much.



Funeral plans, and other concerns related to one's final resting place, may be put in a will. Such instructions are not legally binding but are better than nothing unless you honestly want to end up spending an eternity on your ex's golf course.

As an alternative, you may provide your loved ones with separate written instructions, for your funeral — or memorial or celebration of life—and how you want your remains handled. Funeral homes and similar businesses often provide materials to help you make these difficult decisions.

Even if you favor the approach my mother and father both preferred, which can be summed up as, "I'm dead and won't know anyway," make the effort to at least discuss your wishes with your heirs. Even if you honestly don't care, at least let them know.



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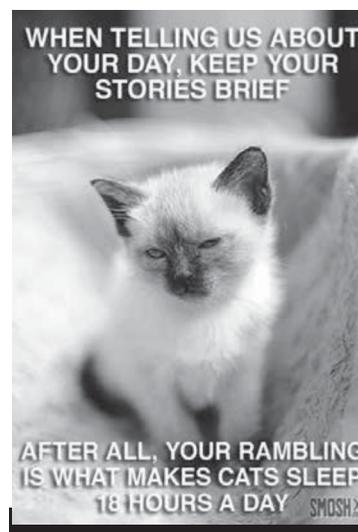
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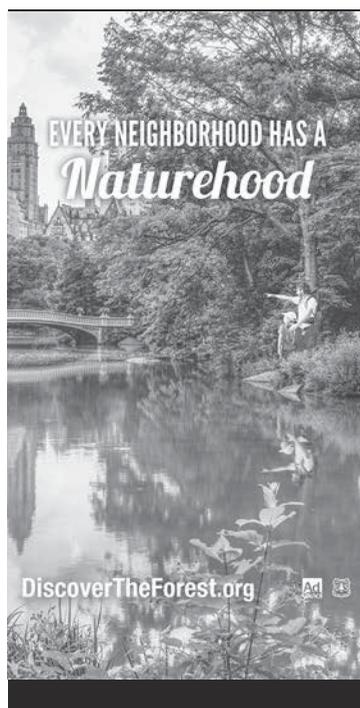
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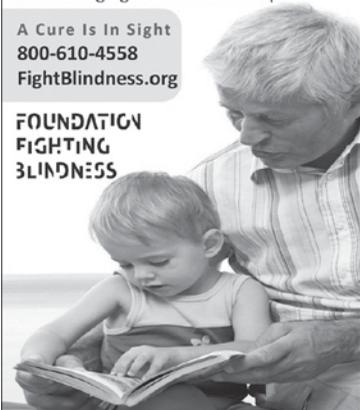
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Movie Preview

'80 for Brady'

By Randal C. Hill

Picture a quartet of huddled, giggly teenage girls swooning over the latest teenage dreamboat pouring out his heart on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand."

Now fast-forward several decades to 2017. The female foursome (Rita Moreno, Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, Sally Field) are now in their 80s and are still gathered together in front of a TV set and clad in blue and red Patriots jerseys, still agog ("Oh, what a beautiful man!") about another dreamy idol.

Not a music maker but movie-star-handsome football player Tom Brady, the powerhouse New England Patriots quarterback, will soon take his team to Super Bowl LI (51).

It suddenly dawns on the ladies that their hero is turning 40 this year, a number normally anathema for a professional athlete. "That's like 80 in people years!" one offers to another in the gathering and spontaneously suggests jetting to New Orleans to see the game — and their hero — in person. The argument is made that "the Super Bowl is no place for old women," but the majority overrides the wet-blanket naysayer for the trip of a lifetime.

It's only when they reach the Big Easy, over that Super Bowl

tickets are (surprise!) prohibitively expensive. That doesn't thwart the group, though, as they set about trying several clever ways to gain entrance to the stands, including attempting to procure winning tickets via a hot-wing-eating contest (hosted by the ubiquitous Guy Fieri) to trying to pass themselves off as half-time show dancers.

The game itself featured nail-biting moments, especially as Tom and the Patriots saw the Atlanta Falcons hold a 28-to-3 lead at halftime, only to have New England vroom back — thanks primarily to Brady — with a win and a final score of 34 to 28. It was one of the greatest comebacks in sports history.

"It has been so cool to see this film come together," Tom Brady enthuses. "To everyone who has helped us get here, THANK YOU. This is an incredible story." Brady, who executive-produced the film through his company 199 Productions, also brings along a trio of teammates from his Patriots days for cameo roles.

"I think there are opportunities for me to tell stories that are near and dear to my heart," he concludes. "And to be able to produce it with amazing actresses was very exciting for me ... I can't wait for people to

see this movie and watch them bring this story to life."

Based on an actual event, "80 for Brady" opens on Feb. 3. See and enjoy.



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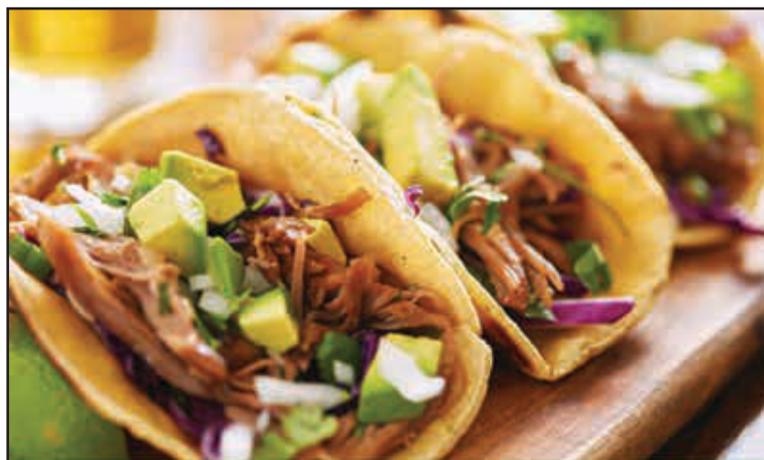

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Continued from page 20

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VedaOils offers a selection of fragrances and carefully selected Essential Oil Blends that may be used in several products to deliver benefits such as improved sleep and less stress, all centered on the holiday spirit.

The enticing combinations include more than 15 varied options and the watch has its specific range of benefits, however, is made of natural fragrances, which means that it can easily be used for personal use as well as in scented products.

The carefully prepared fragrance oils are also ideal to be used in candles, soaps, cosmetic products, skin and hair care products, scented diffusers and perfumes, and room fresheners. Visit VedaOils.com.

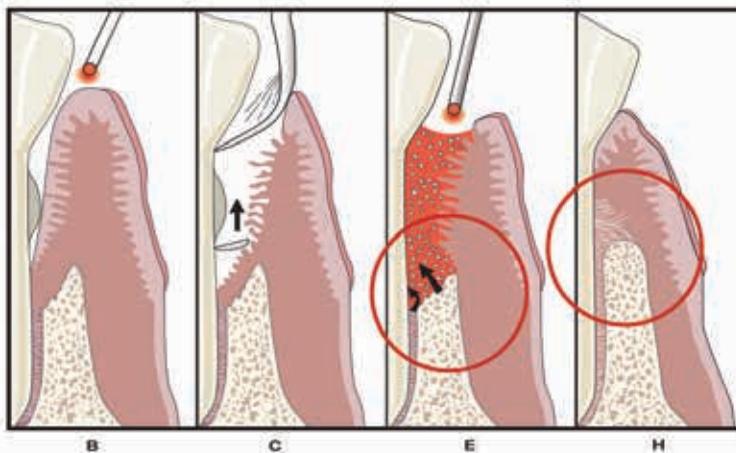


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Technology in Our Lives

5G Home Internet: Powerful Enough for Your Home?

5G Home Internet is making waves when it comes to connectivity. And while the technology behind 5G is a great choice when it comes to mobile data and serving remote areas with limited connectivity, the same might not be said for powering most home Internet needs.



5G strives to be a reliable connection but struggles to power the Internet needs of many households.

Home Internet users must wait in line behind them for connectivity. Think of it as a congested interstate highway, with everyone headed for the same exit.

Additionally, signal obstructions such as weather, buildings, and trees have to be taken into account. Such interferences can lead to unwanted speed

fluctuations and lag during video calls or while gaming — what insiders refer to as latency.

Essentially, this means wireless 5G networks are often less reliable and less secure than wired networks.

According to Speedtest Intelligence® results from Ookla®, the global leader in fixed broadband and mobile network testing applications, 5G Home Internet struggles to consistently maintain broadband speeds over 25 Mbps during peak times.

This has led to online forums

filling up with users lamenting about not being able to keep up with binge-worthy streaming shows, and homes with multiple users competing for quality connections for online work, school or play.

The truth is, 5G can be great for those without options such as cable broadband or other fiber-based services. Otherwise, it results in slower speeds and lag as it shares limited space with mobile user traffic.

Learn more at 5ghomeinternetreviews.com.



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