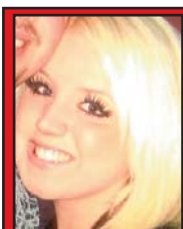


# The Downey Patriot



**Tennis club staying active**  
See Page 4



**Engagement announcement**  
See Page 3



**ESL students graduate**  
See Page 3

Friday, January 8, 2010

Vol. 8 No. 38

8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240



## Jasmin Amezaga passes away

BY HENRY VENERACION,  
STAFF WRITER

**DOWNEY** – Jasmin Amezaga, who passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 29 after being diagnosed with cancer of the liver and lungs just days after her 30th birthday on Nov. 18, was engaged to be married to fiancé Mark Keller in the spring (on April 11), with a honeymoon in Maui to follow.

Amezaga died at her parents' home in West Covina, where she had relocated as she steadily lost strength and required watchful care.

Signs of her weakening state had already been noticed before she was prevailed upon to celebrate her birthday in New Orleans in the company of a few fellow Downey High School employees and her fiancé.

The engaged couple otherwise enjoyed traveling to such destinations as San Francisco ("She loved Monterey, Solvang, the wine country," Keller said), Las Vegas, and New York—"as much as their busy schedules would allow." It was while on a cruise to Mexico last April that Keller had proposed to her. They also enjoyed attending live theatre.

"She was a good writer and loved the classics, both books and film. She loved Jimmy Stewart, for instance," said Keller. "She appreciated Alfred Hitchcock."

An employee since 2001 of the Downey Unified School District, where she was a senior instructional assistant working with Special Education students at both Downey High School and Warren High School, Amezaga also worked part-time for the city of Downey as a house manager at the Downey Theatre.

Keller has also worked part-time at the theatre as a house manager and it was there that the two first met. Keller has also been in demand locally for a number of years as Santa Claus.

According to Keller, Amezaga suffered through the week-end performances of "My Fair Lady" last October with a cold. Her doctor told her then to take time off from both her full-time and part-time jobs.

Her condition was worsening but she "sugar-coated" it, Keller said, putting up a good front to dispel concern.

"The last time I saw her alive was on the morning of the 24th," said Keller. "I got busy performing

See AMEZAGA, page 2

## Downey's float voted 'most spectacular'

■ 'Jewels of the Pacific' wins the Founder's Trophy at Tournament of Roses Parade.

BY HENRY VENERACION,  
STAFF WRITER

**DOWNEY** – Some would call it a hunch, others a demonstration of the power of positive thinking.

Whatever it was, the fact is that, for the second consecutive year and for the 10th time in its decorated history (pun intended), the Downey Rose Float Association has brought home the Founder's Trophy, awarded to the "most beautiful entry built and decorated by volunteers from the sponsoring community or organization."

Association president Susan Domen says, "We knew we had a beautiful float. I always thought we had a good chance to win." Construction crew chief Kelley Roberts was even more positive: his earlier mental image ("In my mind, we've already won") proved compelling, manifesting itself gloriously in objective reality.

As everybody knows by now, including an estimated 40 million New Year's Day Rose Parade viewers nationwide and some 140-or-more million viewers worldwide, Downey's 2010 entry was "Jewels of the Pacific," a salute to the maritime wonders off the California coast. It won over similarly self-built entries from Burbank, Cal Poly, La Canada-Flintridge, South Pasadena, and Sierra Madre.

The 121st Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade featured two popular attractions: one was the smiling and waving Jackie Chan atop China Airlines' (Taiwan) float; another was the participation of the 'Hero of the Hudson' Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger as grand marshal. "This worked well with the prevailing mood. People needed an escape from reality and found comfort in having someone who was considered a national hero," offered Domen.

Downey's winning design, working from the tournament theme, 'A Cut Above the Rest', was fashioned from the imagination of Jason Redfox and Thom Neighbors, who also served as decoration co-chairs. Roberts says the float used, among other things, 42,000 orchids, 10,000 roses, and



PHOTO COURTESY DOWNEY ROSE FLOAT ASSOCIATION

The Downey Rose Float Association was rewarded with the Founder's Trophy, recognizing the "most spectacular float built and decorated by volunteers from a community or organization."

4,000 Gerber daisies.

These same flowers (and other Downey Rose Float-related memorabilia), following tradition, went on sale from Monday to Wednesday with the float parked in front of the Embassy Suites after it sat on the weekend in Pasadena for public viewing. Flower arrangements went for \$5, while a single fresh rose was offered for \$1. The various memorabilia (T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, pins, etc.) commanded anywhere from \$5 to \$18. According to Domen, revenue realized thus runs to about \$2,000-\$3,000. In effect, this represented the association's very first fundraiser for the next float-building cycle.

She said 80 percent of the float's funding comes from fundraisers such as this, and roughly 18 percent from donations; the city donates \$5,000 towards the Miss Downey Pageant.

As can be guessed, building the float is, Sisyphus-like, a never-end-

ing task, truly a year-round affair. Already, as this interview was taking place, Domen's mind was already on the next association activity: this Sunday's Miss Downey Pageant orientation among would-be contestants, to be held at the Downey Theatre. She was thrilled, she said, at the response to the association's addition of a third category to accommodate 10-12 year-olds to its new Junior Miss competition.

In the meantime, a novel fundraising idea hatched by float mainstay and former president Gary De Remer centers around the dropping from a helicopter of assigned golf balls to a green, with holes-in-one winning substantial cash prizes. The scheme of course needs approval from the proper agencies. For now, the (partially) stripped float returns to its barn, of course, and when within the next two weeks the association is apprised of the 2011 Tournament of Roses Parade theme, it will issue an invi-

tation for the submission of design entries. The top three designs chosen are sent to the Pasadena tournament committee, which then picks the winning design.

Once this is determined, the whole float construction can actually start in earnest (after the vials, the moss, etc., will have been stripped off the truck bed and frames, and all the dry materials pulled off). The actual shaping of the next float starts circa April (bending the metal figures, welding and otherwise getting the design parts together, etc.). In December, the figures will again be covered in foam, the ordering of the dry materials will be made, gluing is done, floral areas/configurations are measured and readied, etc.

It was heartening to see about 1,000 volunteers turn out for the decoration phase not too long ago, said Domen, with donors supplying food and drinks. Usually, in years past, 750-800 volunteers was a good number, she said.



## Livas promoted at City Hall

BY CHRISTIAN BROWN,  
STAFF WRITER

**DOWNEY** – Community Development Director Gilbert Livas stepped into a new role this week after being promoted to assistant city manager upon the retirement of Lee Powell, who served the city for nearly 27 years.

Livas was community development director for the city of Bell Gardens before coming to Downey in 2007. Livas will also now assume the role of city treasurer, managing the more than \$50 million reserve the city has maintained despite harsh economic conditions.

On Dec. 15, the City Council confirmed Brian Saeki from the city of Rosemead as Livas' replacement. Saeki was community development director for Rosemead for three years before being tapped by City Manager Gerald Caton last year to replace Livas.

Prior to his time in Rosemead, Saeki was economic development director in Arcadia for six years.

## Award seeks to honor students

**DOWNEY** – Applications are now being accepted for the Downey Youth Service Award, a recognition for local students active in community service.

The award is jointly sponsored by Downey Kiwanis Club and *The Downey Patriot*.

Eligible students must reside and attend a school in Downey. Winners will be recognized during a special dinner Feb. 4 at the Rio Hondo Event Center, where they will receive an awards certificate and gift card from Stonewood Center.

There is no fee to enter. Applications are available at Downey school offices.

Entries must be postmarked no later than Jan. 25 and mailed to The Downey Patriot, Attn: Eric Pierce, 8301 E. Florence Ave., St. 100, Downey, CA 90240.

Entries may also be e-mailed to fvasquez562@gmail.com or eric@thedowneypatriot.com.

## Looking back on...

### Gallatin Elementary School

BY CHRISTIAN BROWN,  
STAFF WRITER

**DOWNEY** – Early in the morning, in a land filled with dairy farms and orange groves, a bronze bell could be heard ringing for miles. For children all across the newly settled community of Downey, the distinct sound meant that school was about to begin.

"We literally walked by and through orange groves and an avocado grove to get to school," said

Kay Cofield. "Not something you would let your children do in today's world."

Mariella Pope and her brother, Bill, also made the journey to the school house from their four-acre orchard on Easy Street, now known as Florence Avenue.

"We walked barefoot to school," said Pope. "We didn't have to wear shoes unless we wanted to."

Awaiting these eager students was Gallatin School, one of

California's first schools that would serve as a catalyst of quality education in the region for decades.

Years before Downey was founded in 1873, two colonies formed on the plains of the Rio Hondo River – College Settlement and Gallatin, a small village near the current intersection of Paramount Boulevard and Florence Avenue.

In the late 1860s, pioneers, concerned about their children's education, built a small school in the

Gallatin town with "tule reeds, brush and what-have-you."

As the town began to grow, the structure, called the "Little Red Gallatin School House" by the settlers, became inadequate and in 1871, a two-story building was constructed where Vons Market now stands today.

As the population increased, the need for schools increased also,

See GALLATIN, page 2

## Elizabeth Blankenship was longtime resident

**DOWNEY** – Elizabeth Lucille Blankenship, a longtime Downey resident, passed away Dec. 23 at Downey Regional Medical Center surrounded by family.



Blankenship was born in Bell on Oct. 24, 1926. Her family moved to Downey and she attended Downey High School, where she was a member of the first graduating class.

It was at Downey High that she met her future husband, Buster. They married in April of 1946 and raised a family of three girls, Karyn, Judy and Barbara, and a son named Thomas.

Blankenship did not work outside the home but was a full-time mother and housewife. In her younger years, she filled time by taking art and sewing classes. She was also active with a social group of women who played bunco every month for nearly 40 years. She had to stop two years ago due to health problems.

She is survived by her sister, Joyce; brother, Stephen; daughters, Karyn, Judy and Barbara; son, Thomas; 12 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild.

She was predeceased by her husband, Buster, in 2007.

## Ethel Hodges, 84, was former resident

**DOWNEY** – Ethel Alice Hodges, a former resident of Downey, died on Jan. 1. She was 84.

She was born in St. Anthony, Idaho on July 24, 1925. She had resided in Oceanside the last 20 years.

She was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a former member of the Downey 3rd Ward.

She is survived by her daughters, Christina Burrows and Janet Larsen; a sister, Ruth Stevens; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Services were held yesterday at the Downey 1st and 3rd Ward Chapels. Burial followed at Riverside National Cemetery.

## Amezaga: Services were held last week.

*Continued from page 1*

at people's homes as Santa. As it happened, test results from the lab before Christmas showed there wasn't anything anybody really could do."

Born in Huntington Park, Amezaga lived most of her life in Downey, graduating from Warren High School.

A memorial service was held Dec. 29 at the Downey-Florence Seventh-day Adventist Church

where, Keller said, "the overflowing, standing-room only crowd made it clear that Jasmin was very well-loved. She touched many lives, created precious memories, and will be very much missed."

In addition to Keller, survivors include her parents, Leonard and Teresa Amezaga; and her sisters Justine and Jamie. She also leaves behind many relatives, co-workers and friends, as well her dogs, Nelson and Tweek, whom she called her "babies."

## Gallatin: Bell is rung by graduating class.

*Continued from page 1*

thus both Alameda School and Downey School were established south and east of Gallatin.

By 1883, College Settlement and Gallatin had been joined by a new town known as Downey, founded by former Governor John Gately Downey's Land Association.

The new community, with Governor Downey's assistance, achieved what the other two settlements could not when the Southern Pacific Railroad brought its railroad through Downey.

As a result, families and businesses from both Gallatin and College Settlement began moving closer to the railroad to open up stores and shops. This caused the unification of all three settlements, creating a larger community called Downey.

To better meet the need of the growing population, the Gallatin School was moved in 1893 to the site it still occupies today on the corner of Brookshire Avenue and Gallatin Road. Surrounded by thick, green trees, a white, two-story school house was built to include a belfry, where a 600 pound bell was rung each morning.

The bell itself was made in New York in the same factory that produced the nation's liberty bell. Sculpted entirely of bronze, the bell did not arrive by land, but by sea.

During this time, the Panama Canal was not yet built; subsequently, the bell was put on a ship, taken around the tip of South America and brought up into the Port of Long Beach.

In this school house, Mr. B.F. Simcoe was responsible for teaching five different grades and 23 students. Local historian Easter Morrison wrote about the challenges Simcoe faced.

"Mr. Simcoe was a poor disciplinarian," she wrote. "The older boys realized his weakness and proceeded to take advantage of it...On one occasion, after being called into class, the older boys refused to sit down. To the question propounded by John Fleming 'who are we' the group responded in unison: 'We are, we are the Gallatin toughs.'"

The school house went through several revisions, one in 1915, and another in 1935 after a 1933 earthquake severely damaged the building.

In 1936, the current structure, built in Spanish colonial style, was opened and the bell mounted in front of the school, where it is



PHOTO COURTESY MARGE LEWIS

Maude Price, right, was one of only two teachers at Gallatin Elementary School from 1937 to 1942. She later became principal.

rung only at the end of each school year by the graduating class.

From 1937 to 1942, Maude Price and Edith Unsworth were the only teachers at Gallatin Elementary School. During this time, Mrs. Unsworth taught the lower grades while Mrs. Price taught the upper grades.

Marge Lewis started the 1st grade at Gallatin in 1946 and remembers Principal Maude Price.

"For such a tiny woman she had a very powerful personality," said Lewis. "Her classes were vivid and memorable – the other talent Mrs. Price had was convincing all of her students at Gallatin that they were exceptional. She, for example, would say, 'I can take Gallatin students anywhere and they will always behave perfectly.'"

Both Price and Unsworth have schools bearing their names as a testament to their influence on the Downey education system.

Moreover, Gallatin Elementary School, founded by frontiers and established by innovative educators, continues to produce quality students, who once a year ring its bell as a tribute to its rich history.



Gallatin Elementary as it appeared in its early days.



Today, the school is virtually unchanged. The current building was built in 1936 in Spanish colonial style.

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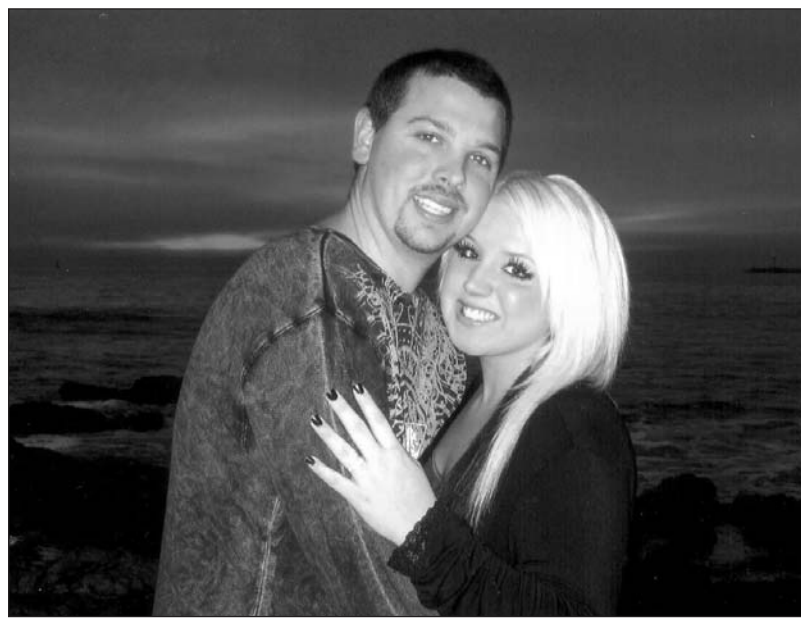
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Ronald and Marilyn Sheldon, of Downey, are happy to announce the engagement of their granddaughter, Sabrina Aurand, to Michael Gleason, son of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Gleason, of Huntington Beach. The bride-to-be is a 2006 graduate of Warren High School, where she was a cheerleader. She is currently attending Cypress College and will transfer to Cal State Long Beach in the fall. She works for State Farm Insurance in Huntington Beach. Her fiancé is a 2005 graduate of Huntington Beach High School, where he played basketball for four years. He will receive his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Cal State Long Beach this spring. He currently works at Albertson's in Huntington Beach and Catel Restaurant at Downtown Disney. No date has been set for the nuptials.

## Students to experience symphony

**DOWNEY** – Approximately 1,750 DUSD fifth-graders will be treated to a performance by the Downey Symphony at the Downey Theatre on Jan. 21.

The concert is made possible by a donation from the Downey Kiwanis Foundation.

During the concert, Music Director Sharon Lavery and members of the orchestra will explain musical terms and concepts before playing pieces of music. Band members from Downey and Warren high schools will join the orchestra for certain pieces.

## Ribbon-cuttings next week

**DOWNEY** – Two new businesses will celebrate their grand openings with ribbon cuttings next week.

The Point Insurance Services will host a ribbon cutting Tuesday at 4 p.m. The company offers home, auto, life, health and commercial insurance services. It also deals with employee benefits and worker's compensation.

On Wednesday, also at 4 p.m., LPL Financial Services will host its own ribbon cutting. The company offers investment planning, asset management, estate planning, consultations and more.

The Downey Chamber of Commerce is assisting with both events. For more information, call (562) 923-2191.

## Chamber luncheon at Embassy

**DOWNEY** – The Downey Chamber of Commerce will host its annual anniversary luncheon Jan. 22 at the Embassy Suites.

Longtime Chamber members will speak and past presidents will be recognized.

Plaques and certificates will be issued to longtime Chamber members. Reservations are \$25 and available by calling (562) 923-2191.

## Street Faire spaces available

**DOWNEY** – Vendor spaces are now available for the Downey Street Faire, taking place May 1 on Brookshire Avenue.

A 10'x10' space is \$120 for non-food vendors and \$135 for food sellers. Vendors provide their own canopy, table and chairs.

For more information, including new liability insurance requirements, call the Downey Chamber of Commerce at (562) 923-2191.

## Rise 'N Shine on Tuesday

**DOWNEY** – George Zoumerakis of Trilogy Financial Services and Emilio Rocha of Ultimate Records Organizing Systems will be guest speakers at the Tuesday morning meeting of Rise 'N Shine Networking at Downey Brewing Company.

Cost to attend is an order from the menu. The meeting begins at 7:30 a.m.

For more information, call the Downey Chamber of Commerce at (562) 923-2191.

## Miss Downey orientation Sunday

**DOWNEY** – The Downey Rose Float Association is accepting applications for the 2010 Miss Downey Pageant.

An orientation for potential contestants will be held Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Downey City Library. Applications can be turned in then and will continue to be accepted until Jan. 18.

Contestants must be at least 10-12 years old to compete for Junior Miss Downey; 13-15 for Miss Teen Downey; and 16-23 for Miss Downey.

For more information, call Susan Domen at (562) 862-7172.

## DHS wrestling alumni night

**DOWNEY** – Downey High School's wrestling program will celebrate its Alumni Night on Thursday.

Pizza and refreshments will be served in room Z-2, located south of the girl's locker room, from 4 to 5:30 p.m., before Downey wrestlers grapple with Paramount.

Visitors should RSVP with Coach Soto, msoto@dusd.net, or Coach Weisenburger, gweisenburger@dusd.net.

## Business mixer Jan. 21

**DOWNEY** – Keller Williams Realty will host a business mixer Jan. 21 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Admission is free and there will be refreshments and door prizes available.

Keller Williams is at 8280 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, near Downey Avenue.

## Church collecting e-waste

**DOWNEY** – First Presbyterian Church of Downey will host an electronics recycling roundup event Jan. 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The church will accept televisions, monitors, computers, cell phones, printers, speakers, keyboards, radios, DVD players, VCRs and more.

Items that will not be accepted include household appliances, batteries, toner and ink cartridges, and cans or bottles.

Electronics can be dropped off at the church during the event, or Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call (562) 861-6752.

## Parents invited to meet tutors

**DOWNEY** – Parents of local middle school students are invited to meet tutors approved by the Downey Unified School District during a "provider fair" tomorrow at Sussman Middle School.

Parents will have the opportunity to meet tutors and ask questions about free tutoring services available. The information will help parents select a tutor for their child.

Free after-school tutoring is available for middle school students who receive free or reduced-price meals at school.

The provider fair is from 9 a.m. to noon inside the Sussman Middle School cafeteria.

## Concert tomorrow at Temple

**DOWNEY** – Cantor Ken Jaffee will be joined by Cantor Jennifer Bern-Vogel and accompanist Jerry Ripley in presenting "A Song for All Seasons" at Temple Ner Tamid of Downey on Jan. 9 at 7 p.m.

General admission tickets are \$25; reserved front section seats are \$36. All tickets include light refreshments during intermission and an opportunity to win several door prizes.

For tickets or information, call (562) 861-9276.

## Open enrollment starts Feb. 1

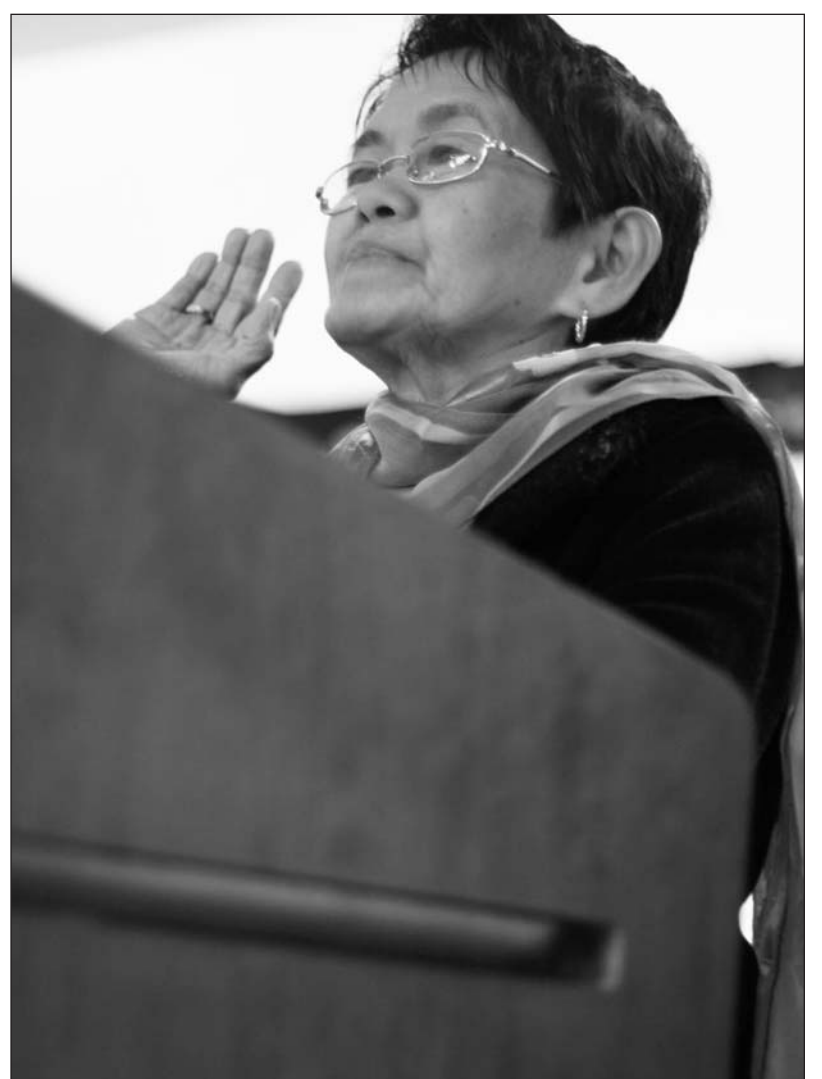
**DOWNEY** – The Downey Unified School District will conduct its annual School of Choice open enrollment during the month of February for the 2010-2011 school year.

Parents of students wishing to attend a Downey school out of their attendance area can pick up an application at any DUSD school or at the district office Feb. 1-26.

New students – including kindergartners – entering a Downey school for the first time should register at their school of residence.

A lottery will be held to place students on the School of Choice waiting list for 2010-2011.

For more information, call the Office of Pupil Services at (562) 469-6554.



ESL (English as a Second Language) students graduated after completing the highest course level offered at Downey Adult School. Level five graduates studied idioms, advanced vocabulary and grammar structures. Graduation ceremonies took place Dec. 17-18 in the Harriett Paine Event Center, with more than 700 people in the audience. "Downey Adult School is proud of these students and wishes them continued success," the school said in a statement. All levels of ESL are open at Downey Adult School. For information, visit [www.das.edu](http://www.das.edu) or call (562) 940-6200.



Students from the Gauldin Elementary Fitness Club collected and donated more than 400 books to troops stationed overseas in Iraq. The kids, who were participating in the Books for Troops program, shipped the books on Nov. 30. "I am very proud of them and hope that our troops will be happy to know we support them," said teacher Alex Gaytan, who heads the club.

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# Young clarinetist named soloist

BY JOYCE SHERWIN,  
DOWNEY SYMPHONY

**DOWNEY** – For a new year, a new decade, what could be more fitting on the Downey Theatre stage than a fresh new talent, performing as soloist with our symphony orchestra?

May we introduce Gabriel

Campos, a 20-year-old clarinetist from Costa Rica with a significant list of awards already under his belt. Now he adds another distinction. He has been selected by Music Director Sharon Lavery, herself a clarinetist, to be the soloist in the orchestra's next concert on Saturday evening, Jan. 23.

Campos will play Weber's con-

certo No. 2 for Clarinet and Orchestra, the centerpiece of a program that includes Grieg's Holbert Suite and Mozart's Jupiter Symphony. Concert time is 8 p.m., with a preview discussion at 7:15.

Tickets are \$25 and \$30 may be purchased by phoning the symphony office, (562) 403-2944, or at the theater box office on Wednesday,

Jan. 20 between noon and 4 p.m., as well as on the evening of the performance.

Downey's theater is located at 8435 Firestone Boulevard, and parking is plentiful and free.

# Dithering on drinking puts youth at risk

BY STEPHEN WALLACE,  
M.S. ED.

The start of a new year often brings with it a resolve to try something new, fix something old, or tackle a problem too long left unsolved. Imagine what the start of a new decade could offer.

A specific problem that has long suffered from vast national equivocation has been one that involves the health and safety of young peo-

ple: underage drinking.

Curious given a concerted federal effort to curb underage drinking. The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD), which is chaired by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, supports a range of programs.

That effort, among others, seems to have made some progress.

But progress may be slowing –

meaning it's time to revisit the issue and the role all adults play (or don't play) in realizing the goals set out in a report from the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine of the National Academies ("Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility") – a critical research-based book and call to action that got the ball rolling.

According to new Monitoring the Future data from the University of Michigan, a long-term gradual decline in alcohol use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders has leveled off, with the trend continuing for only the 8th graders.

Similar results were found for binge drinking, defined as the consumption of five (for men, four for women) or more drinks in a row at least once in the previous two weeks.

Not encouraging news given what we know about youth and alcohol.

For example, the Academies estimate the annual cost of underage drinking at \$53 billion in losses from traffic deaths, violent crime and other destructive behavior. When it comes to older adolescents, Teens Today research from SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) reveals that by 12th grade more than 3 in 4 teens are drinking.

The Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) notes that 85 percent of 17-year-old drinkers get drunk at least once in a typical month.

And then there's college. In February 2009, a survey of 6,608 students at the University of Wisconsin revealed:

- 33 percent of respondents reported that they have missed classes due to alcohol,
- 24 percent of respondents reported they had unprotected sex due to alcohol, and
- 49 percent of respondents reported doing something while drinking alcohol that they later regretted.

So pervasive is college drinking that teens in SADD-related focus groups cite preparing for it as a primary reason for drinking in high school.

Ralph Hingson of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism points out some of the same as well as other alcohol-relat-

ed consequences for college students:

**Death:** 1,700 die each year from alcohol-related unintentional injuries, including motor vehicle crashes.

**Injury:** 599,000 are unintentionally injured under the influence of alcohol.

**Assault:** More than 696,000 are assaulted by another student who has been drinking.

**Sexual Abuse:** More than 97,000 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape.

**Unsafe Sex:** 400,000 have unprotected sex and more than 100,000 report having been too intoxicated to know if they consented to having sex.

**Academic Problems:** About 25 percent of students report academic consequences of their drinking, including missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall.

**Drunk Driving:** 2.1 million drive under the influence of alcohol each year.

And yet the problem of alcohol use on or around college campuses continues to be a polarizing issue, with some in higher education advocating for lowering the minimum legal drinking age (poof ... the "problem" then disappears) while prevention experts insist that the law saves lives and serves as an effective deterrent (SADD research points to the 21-year-old minimum legal drinking age as the number one reason those younger don't drink).

Similarly, researchers at the Washington University School of Medicine credit the current law for a decline in binge drinking among 12- to 20-year-old males (females are not doing as well), although they found that college students of both genders are binge drinking more.

Knowing the scale and the cost of the problem, all Americans can begin the new decade with a renewed sense of urgency to pursue proven effective strategies to reduce underage drinking at college ... and before. A good start, as with other problems, is acknowledging that one exists.

The time to equivocate ran out when the ball dropped at midnight on December 31.

Stephen Wallace serves as national chairman and chief executive officer of SADD, Inc. (Students Against Destructive Decisions). For more information about SADD, visit [sadd.org](http://sadd.org). For more information about Stephen, visit [stephengray-wallace.com](http://stephengray-wallace.com).

## POET'S CORNER New Years Resolutions

This year, we should resolve  
To do the best we can  
To make our world evolve  
A better place for man.

So we should concentrate  
On making life worthwhile  
We all appreciate  
A friendly word and smile.

So we should all arrange  
Before our News Years start  
To make the kind of change  
That benefits the heart.

Let's concentrate on love  
To love our fellow man  
And ask the Lord above  
To help us with our plan.

Help global warming end  
Help purify the air  
Become a better friend  
And show you truly care.

Before we start the year  
Let's counteract the strife  
With happiness and cheer  
And make a better life.

It's easy as a breeze  
And here is my advice  
"God bless you" when you sneeze  
Is one way to be nice.

Just say the words as though  
"God bless you" is a prayer  
And then they're sure to know  
You really truly care.

A compliment or two  
A "Thank you" and a smile  
Will let them know that you  
Will go the extra mile.

So mean it from the heart  
And always be sincere  
"God bless you as you start  
A prosperous New Year."

—Bill Milburn,  
Downey



Rio San Gabriel Elementary and Kirkwood Christian Schools students celebrated the holidays by singing at a recent Christmas program at First Baptist Church of Downey.



Members of the Downey Tennis Club's executive board are pictured above. The club is celebrating its 44th year in 2010.

## Tennis Club staying busy

**DOWNEY** – The Downey Tennis Club held its Christmas party recently at the Rio Hondo Event Center.

The club is celebrating its 44th year in 2010. The club meets regularly for matches at Independence Park, weekend tennis socials, quarterly inter-club matches with neighboring cities, and a weekender at a local tennis resort, such as Casa Via Mar in Oxnard or Shadow Mountain in Palm Desert.

The group also meets for off-the-court social events.

For information on joining the club, call Jean Jones at (562) 927-4820 or visit [www.downeytennisclub.com](http://www.downeytennisclub.com).

## DINING-OUT DEALS

**Peloon** 10822 LAKEWOOD BLVD.,  
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Next to Stonewood Mall

Your choice of any item on the Dinner or Pasta section of our menu. valid only with purchase of two beverages 1 coupon per table • No take-out

**BUY ONE DINNER AT REGULAR PRICE  
GET ONE DINNER FREE!**  
of equal value or less (with coupon only)

Expires 1-21-10 Not good with any other offer

**Downtown Bar-B-Que Company**  
BBQ is here!

Ribs - Chicken - Pork - Tri Tip - Chili  
Wings - Brisket - Draught Beer

11045 Downey Ave., Downey  
(562) 904-0447

Buy 1 menu item @ reg. price.  
Receive 2nd of equal or lesser value 50% off  
1 per visit • Not valid on "Packages" • Not valid w/ any other offer

Join us for our Sunday  
Champagne Brunch

\$13.99 Adults  
Children 4 to 12 years \$7.99  
Children 3 and under pay their age.  
Every Sunday from 9 a.m. till 2 p.m.

**Marie Callender's** 7860 Florence Ave.,  
Downey  
Restaurant & Bakery 562-927-3327

**Gloria's Authentic Mexican Cuisine!**  
COCINA MEXICANA

7401 FLORENCE AVE. • DOWNEY, CA 90240  
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**Piazza McDonald's**  
Don't Let History Pass You By!

Big Mac  
Extra Value Meal  
\$3.99  
Everyday

\*Only at the Speedee McDonald's at 10207 Lakewood Blvd @ Florence

**PIZZATIME**

8310 Stewart & Gray Rd., Downey  
562.904.9455

2 Large Pizzas  
2 toppings  
18<sup>99</sup>  
FREE 2 Liter of Coke  
W/ coupon

OPEN 7 DAYS  
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**AVATAR 3D (DIGITAL 3DX)** PG-13  
(11:25, 12:05, 3:15, 4:00, 7:05, 7:45, 10:35)

**DAYBREAKERS** R (12:15, 2:45, 5:15), 7:45, 10:15

**LEAP YEAR** PG (12:05, 2:35, 5:05), 7:35, 10:05

**YOUTH IN REVOLT** R (10:25, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20), 7:40, 10:00

**IT'S COMPLICATED** R (10:55, 1:45, 4:35), 7:25, 10:15

**SHERLOCK HOLMES** PG-13 (11:00, 1:50, 4:50), 7:00, 7:50, 10:00, 10:45

**ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL** PG (10:30, 12:45, 2:55, 5:10), 7:30, 9:50

**UP IN THE AIR** R (11:00, 2:00, 4:40), 7:20, 10:00

**THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG** G (11:30, 2:00, 4:30)

Times for Friday-Thursday, January 8-14, 2010  
Bargain Matinee ( ) Advance ticket sales  
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**Bingo**  
Thursday Afternoon  
Games start at Noon

~ many special programs ~

Woman's Club of Downey  
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~ Proceeds benefit Rancho ~

**DOWNEY PARTY RENTALS**

New Sunday Hours  
12:00 - 3:00 PM

10900 Paramount Blvd.  
Downey CA 90241  
(562) 861-1616

Open Late Thursdays  
Till 7:00 PM

# Keep on

By Henry Veneracion

Three weeks ago, a man I knew only slightly suffered a stroke from which he never recovered. The storyline is familiar: he smoked heavily, drank a lot, spent hours playing video games on his computer—in short, he abused himself. He had a milder stroke two years earlier, but I understand he didn't take the prescribed pills and never bothered about exercise or diet.

A relative could only sigh and say, "One never knows when death will come. He was only 41."

How many times have we heard people say, after a loved one dies: "Life is precious. Enjoy each moment"? The lead character in Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," Emily, uttered this variation: "Live every, every minute!" An image you can carry with you attesting to the finality of life's last moments is Faust desperately begging the forces of heaven and hell to stay time's march "one more hour, one more half-hour, one more second...!"

As we welcome another new year, we're liable to be overwhelmed by the sheer weight of new resolutions, of plans half-baked and poorly-designed, and depressed by the shards of last year's broken dreams.

We never learn: life is at once triumph and tragedy, success and failure, prosperity and poverty, pleasure and pain, peace of mind and heartache, trenchant observations and platitudes, humility and hubris, the dance of moonbeams and the invisibility of dark matter, half is order-arranged faith and the rest is all mystery.

Thus Pascal: "No amount of learning can efface the eternal silence of these infinite spaces." Along the same vein, this from an unidentified source: "All the knowledge in the world is small recompense for the things we can't possibly know." And: "No amount of wisdom will explain away the strange workings of this world."

That the incidence of crime and violence here and elsewhere will continue there can be no doubt. Have there been wars without bloodshed? From the beginning, evil has plagued mankind. Men, well-meaning men, cry peace, but there is no peace.

One can only keep trying to do one's best, keep on hoping and praying, keep on going, and keep on keeping on.

## Letters to the Editor:

### Graffiti removal

Dear Editor:

On Dec. 23, I called the Graffiti Hotline to report tagging in our neighborhood. Graffiti specialist Lisa Fox took the call and assured me the job would be done as soon as possible.

On Christmas Day at 7:30 a.m., we heard the sound of a large truck engine. It was a graffiti department truck and an employee busy cleaning the area.

It was amazing to have this job done so early on a holiday, especially Christmas. This is just another reason Downey has such an efficient program of graffiti removal – a dedicated graffiti removal department.

Removing and cleaning graffiti costs cities huge sums of money. The city of San Jose spends about \$3 million a year; Portland, Ore., about \$2 million; Minneapolis about \$4 million. The most common type of property vandalism (35 percent) is graffiti, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Many cities agree this type of vandalism must be immediately removed (ideally within 24-48 hours) to be effective. Leaving it up just incites more of this illegal activity. Many studies indicate the majority of taggers are males between the ages of 12 and 21.

Favorite sites for graffiti: walls, phone booths, fire hydrants, glass windows, poles, street curbs, sidewalks, sides of railroad cars, sides of large trucks, business signs, pedestrian call buttons at intersections, walls in school and park restrooms... you name it and it's likely to be tagged.

Downey's very efficient graffiti removal department uses many kinds of armament to clean up the mess, including a special spray in a can that will remove most tags, pressure systems on their trucks and various chemicals.

Downey will remain beautiful if we immediately report graffiti, if we continue to remove any illegally posted signs and if each of us does not litter.

— **Byron Dillon,**  
Downey

Editor's note: The Graffiti Hotline number is (562) 923-4484.

Letters to the editor may be submitted by writing to The Downey Patriot, 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240 or by e-mail to downeypatriot@yahoo.com. Letters may be edited for style and/or content. Letters must include a full name and address for verification.

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Henry Veneracion	Staff Writer
Scott Cobos	Staff Writer
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TEL (562) 904-3668   FAX (562) 904-3124   Hours Monday-Friday 9a.m. - 3p.m. 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240   www.thedowneypatriot.com The Downey Patriot is published weekly by Jennifer DeKay-Givens. Controlled Distribution, 25,000 copies printed. Distributed by CIPS Marketing Group, Inc., Los Angeles, CA.	

## Letters to the Editor:

### Thankful every day

Dear Editor:

I told myself, this is a new year and a Letter to the Editor should "...accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, don't mess with Mister In-Between," so I'll try.

There are things to be thankful for every day. A Lord to whom I owe my existence, the gifts my Creator has bestowed upon me through no doing of my own, a wife who loves and supports me in all my foibles, two beautiful children I can be proud of, a church where I can celebrate the Lord and be reminded to not stray too far from the path, a splendid community, and the best nation in the world that I'm fortunate to be a citizen of.

A few may question devotion to a Higher Power but it is presumptuous to believe I'm the "be all, end all" of my existence. I'm just not that important and there is something greater than all of us put together. I know that the mind I think with, the heart I feel with, and the body to cart it all around in, are gifts for which I did nothing to deserve and must be thankful for. Beyond that, few things are a greater blessing than a loving wife sharing my journey through life. And then children, the only significant life I will usher into this world, to be treasured and enjoyed as much as a budding flower or a spring shower.

Moving away from the home, Downey is a pretty darn good community even if our planners occasionally leave me wondering, or parking versus traffic on Florence Avenue has me muttering. These are difficult times and without responsible management where it counts, our community would be a lot worse off, and it isn't. That's something to be thankful for.

Then we get farther afield, to the state and federal arenas. Then I wonder, because they have wandered even farther afield. We have the greatest nation on the face of the Earth, truthfully. We owe our blessing to founding fathers who had a keen understanding of humanity and humanness. The value of each individual never more eloquently stated "...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Among the most appreciative Americans are those coming from other countries, knowing that in America they can succeed and be free. This is the American way. When you set out to succeed in America, whether you were Mexican, Moroccan, Turkish or Irish, culturally you are now American, and that's something to be proud of. If only our "leaders" would respect this nation of individuals who are largely capable of running our own lives quite handily and know that what we sow we reap and is ours firstly to keep, we would be better off.

Not to lose faith, if our nation gets run into the ditch, as may happen, it can make us appreciate the path we have strayed from. Feeling pride as we should, and being American as we are, we will find our way again and be a stronger people.

For that I am thankful every day.

— **Scott Ramey,**  
Downey

## Following the Irish example

By Howard Rich

While American politicians continue to indulge the unsustainable excesses of a federal government already littered with unnecessary functions, other nations have wisely begun to read the handwriting on the wall.

What does it say?

"Cut, cut, cut!"

Take Ireland, which (like America) found itself buried under a mountain of deficit spending in 2009 as the global economic recession crippled income and revenue growth. Making matters worse, a huge speculative housing boom swept across the nation just prior to the bottom falling out of the global economy, which has made its recession even more severe. In fact Ireland's unemployment rate is currently 12.8% – the third highest rate in all of Europe.

Things got so bad that at one point last year, the Irish government was borrowing €400 million (\$575 million) a week just to keep its head above water, with its deficit rapidly approaching 20% of its gross domestic product. At that level, "the very financial survival of Ireland would have been at risk," according to the country's finance minister.

Sound familiar?

It's almost exactly what's happening in America, albeit on a smaller scale.

Yet while American politicians are pushing new socialist spending sprees and bigger government power grabs in 2010, Ireland's government is doing exactly what the country's businesses and families have been forced to do as a result of the downturn – find ways to make ends meet.

In addition to slashing salaries for more than 400,000 government workers (including its top administration officials), Irish leaders have also shown a willingness to trim back numerous social welfare programs. All told, the Irish cuts will save as much as \$6 billion this year – and as much as \$22 billion over the next four years.

Ireland is not making these decisions in a vacuum. In fact, the country has already learned the hard way that unchecked government growth does not translate into "recovery." During the 1980's, a massive expansion of government debt (and a failure on the part of political leaders to make cuts when they were necessary) spawned anemic economic growth, soaring interest rates and an unemployment rate that soared to nearly 20%.

Irish economists refer to this period as "the lost decade."

"In the 1980s, we saw what can happen when you ignore the problem of overspending," Alan Ahearn, a special adviser in Ireland's Finance Ministry, told The Washington Post in December. "We're not going to make that mistake again."

American politicians, on the other hand, are tripping over themselves in a headlong rush to make precisely that same mistake – on a much larger scale.

Not content with a dramatic expansion of the size and scope of the federal government, President Barack Obama and his Congressional allies are planning to pour billions of additional taxpayer dollars down the sinkhole of state government bureaucracies in 2010 – this in spite of clear and compelling evidence that such spending has failed miserably to stimulate economic "recovery."

Meanwhile, a seemingly un-scalable mountain of government debt grows even higher – while the taxpayers' ability to repay it is further hamstrung.



## Underlying problems

The discussion of Thomas Jefferson's comments about money and banks in *The Downey Patriot's* New Year's edition is interesting but beside the point. (Letters to the Editor, 1/1/10)

Going back to the 18th Century is not an option. Technology and the study of economics lead to a role for the Federal Reserve Bank that was quite successful by the end of the 20th century. At the time of its founding in 1917, the country had for decades been rocked about every seven years by one financial panic after another, and the goal was to set up a system that would stabilize the financial system. While clearly ineffective initially, after the great crash of 1929 and its massive bank failures, additional regulations were set up and enforced that kept banks small, separated bank lending from investment, and laid a basis for the Federal Reserve System to work. During this period, the idea of financial panics in boom/bust cycles became something taught in history classes, and by 1982 the leaders of the Fed had essentially achieved the goal of a country with relatively steady growth and expansion with minimal inflation.

At the end of World War II, the paper dollar became the world's pre-eminent currency, and was a key element in the prosperity of the last half of the 20th century. Today, the paper dollar is mostly obsolete – most of the dollars in circulation are electronic. Going back to carrying gold around is simply not an option, and is unlikely to improve our economy. The U.S. had plenty of booms and busts while on the gold standard, and a long period of continuous prosperity while off of it. Attempting to back the dollar with gold would needlessly tie our nations (and the world's) finances to the fortunes of the mining industry, which is why that is the principal source of the PR funds that are trying to convince people to do just that.

Sadly, there are a lot of people who don't recognize a good thing. At the end of 1999, Sen. Phil Gramm included a repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act in the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Financial Services Modernization Act, and President Clinton signed it. Together with two earlier financial deregulation bills, this completely removed the wall of separation between retail and commercial banks on the one hand, and investment banking and other financial services on the other, in the name of deregulation and modernization. The problem is that doing this pulled the rug out from under the Federal Reserve. Instead of making funds available to support the liquidity of institutions that were restricted to lending those funds out in support of commerce, funds made available by the Fed could now be diverted to investments – and to the most high-risk sorts of investments, derivatives. And it is not just diversion – as long as the same firms do both, it is impossible for the Fed to maintain liquidity in the financial markets without making the same cash available for speculation, at the discretion of bank management.

No sooner did this happen than the investment bubbles started forming and popping, with three major bubbles during the last decade: tech, energy, and housing. If people can borrow money for practically nothing and use it to bet on commodities and derivatives, they will line up like pigs at a trough, bidding values up until they form a bubble, and eventually it will pop.

This also explains what has happened to much of the money that bailed out the banks when their bets all came up snake eyes as the housing bubble popped in 2008. Instead of lending the bailout money on "main street" (for businesses and mortgages), they have put most of it back into their investment banking and derivatives casino, seeking higher and easier (but ultimately riskier) returns. Moreover, in order to save failing institutions, many of the remaining investment banks had to be merged into commercial banks, and vice versa.

The problem is not the Federal Reserve System itself, but the repeal of Glass-Steagall. Those who would like a stable future in which America can resume leading the world should press their representatives and the White House to break up the too-big-to-fail banks. These banks would have failed without the bailout, and it is now time for the underlying problems of too-big-to-fail and diversion of Fed money from lending to be fixed. I am confident that if Thomas Jefferson had seen the economic history of the period from the Civil War through today, and had the opportunity to study modern economics, he would agree.

— **Matt Filler,**  
Downey

In fact, according to a recent report from the Heritage Foundation, Obama's budget proposals would impose \$13 trillion in deficit spending over the coming decade, bringing annual budget deficits in America to more than \$2 trillion and the U.S. public debt to more than \$20 trillion.

This is beyond reckless – it is courting economic calamity on an unprecedented scale. Yet unlike leaders in Ireland, politicians in America appear incapable of grasping the fundamental reality that nations cannot borrow their way out of debt – or borrow their way into prosperity.

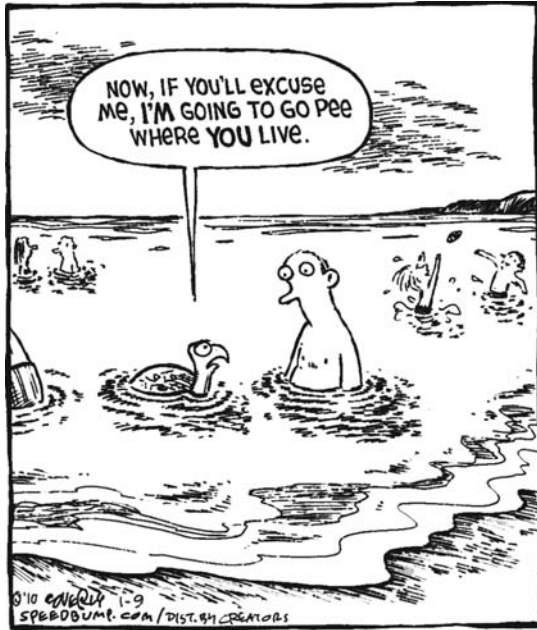
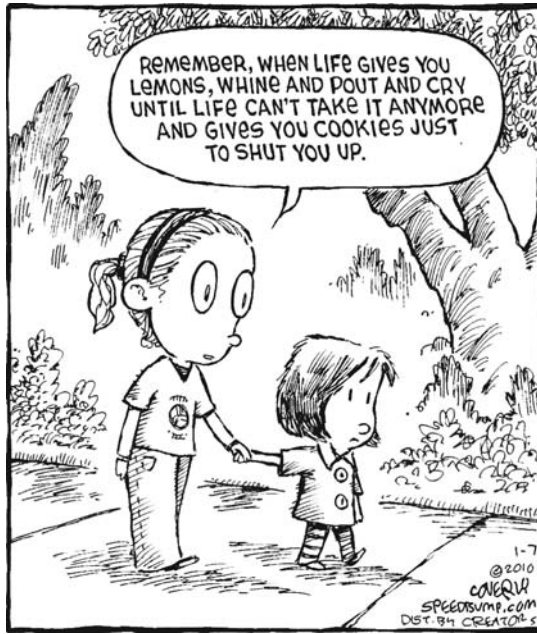
The longer America's current leaders refuse to acknowledge this self-evident truth, the deeper the hole gets for the American taxpayers.

Howard Rich is the Chairman of *Americans for Limited Government* and a *Liberty Features* Syndicated writer.

## SPEED BUMP



## DAVE COVERLY



# Downey Community Calendar

### Events For January

- Sat. Jan. 9: **Meet DUSD tutors**, Sussman Middle School, 9 a.m.
- Sat. Jan. 9: **Concert and raffle**, Temple Ner Tamid, 7 p.m.
- Sun. Jan. 10: **Miss Downey orientation**, Downey City Library, 2 p.m.
- Tues. Jan. 12: **Rise 'N Shine networking**, Downey Brewing Company, 7:30 a.m.
- Tues. Jan. 12: **Ribbon-cutting**, The Pointe Insurance, 4 p.m.
- Wed. Jan. 13: **Ribbon-cutting**, LPL Financial Services, 4 p.m.

### City Meetings

- 1st Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.: **Redevelopment Project Area Committee**, Cormack Meeting Room at Downey Library.
- 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.: **Planning Commission**, Council Chamber at City Hall.
- 1st Tuesday, 4:00 p.m.: **Recreation and Community Services Commission**, Council Chamber, City Hall.
- 1st Thursday, 9 a.m.: **Traffic Committee**, Training Room, Second Floor of City Hall.
- 2nd & 4th Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.: **City Council/Community Development Commission**, Council Chamber.
- 3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.: **Library Advisory Board**, at Downey City Library.
- 3rd Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.: **Water Board**, at City Hall.
- 4th Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.: **Emergency Preparedness Committee**, at Fire Station No. 1.

### Regularly Scheduled Meetings

#### Mondays

- 8:00 a.m.: **Job Club**, at The First Presbyterian Church, for info. call 861-6752.
- 2nd Mon., 11 a.m.: **American Legion Auxiliary #270**, at United Methodist Church, for info. call 923-2481.
- 2nd Mon., 3 p.m.: **Keep Downey Beautiful**, at City Hall, for more information call 904-7159.
- 4th Mon., 7:30 p.m.: **Downey Numismatists**, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.

#### Tuesdays

- 9:30 a.m.: **Downey Seniors Club**, at Apollo Park, for information call Nadine Morris at 923-9422.
- 10 a.m.: **Downey Bocce Club**, at 7850 Quill Drive, for information call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.
- 12 p.m.: **Rotary Club**, at Rio Hondo, for information call Brian Saylor at 927-2000.
- 6:00 p.m.: **Toastmasters Club 587**, at First Baptist Church, for info call John McAllister 869-0928.
- 7 p.m.: **Boy Scout Troop 2**, at Downey United Methodist Church, for information call 869-6478.
- 1st Tues., 7:30 a.m.: **Gangs Out of Downey**, at City Hall training room.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 6 p.m.: **Sertoma Club**, at Cafe 'N Stuff, for information call (562) 927-6438.
- 2nd Tues., 6 p.m.: **Downey Fly Fishers**, at Apollo Park, for information call 425-7936.
- 3rd Tues., 6:30 p.m.: **Community Emergency Response Team meeting**, Fire station 1, 12222 Paramount.
- 3rd Tues., 7:30 p.m.: **Writer's Workshop West**, at at Downey High School library, for info call 862-3106.

#### Wednesdays

- 7 a.m.: **Kiwanis Club**, at Rio Hondo Events Center. Call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.
- 1 p.m.: **Women's Bocce Club**, at 7850 Quill Drive, for information call Marie Puch at 869-4366.
- 7 p.m.: **Out Post 132 Royal Rangers**, at Desert Reign Church, for info call 928-8000.
- 1st Weds., 10 a.m.: **Woman's Club of Downey**, for information call Barbara Briley-Beard 869-7618.
- 1st Weds., 11:30 a.m.: **Downey Coordinating Council**, at Community Center, for information call 923-4357.
- 1st Weds., 7:30 p.m.: **Downey Stamp Club**, at Maude Price School cafeteria, for information call 928-3028.
- 2nd Weds., 7 p.m.: **Downey Sister City Assoc.**, at Maude Price School, for information call 884-9657.
- 2nd Weds., 7:30 p.m.: **Downey Model A Club**, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, for information call 928-4132.
- 2nd & 4th Weds., 11:30 a.m.: **Downey AARP**, at Barbara J. Riley Senior Center, for info. call Lorene Frazier 861-6075.
- 3rd Weds., - **Downey Dog Obedience Club** Apollo Park, for info. call Gina 869-5213 or Valerie 420-2972.
- 3rd Weds., 6 p.m. - **American Business Women's Association**, Rio Hondo Country Club, Call Barbara Carlson 863-2192.
- 4th Weds., 12:00 noon: **Retired Federal Employees**, at Barbara J Riley Center, call 943-5513.
- Wed. & Fri., 10:15 a.m.: **Senior Bingo**, at Apollo Park, for information call 904-7223.

#### Thursdays

- 7:30 a.m.: **Connections Networking**, at Cafe N Stuff, for information, call Sandy Esslinger, (310) 491-8989.
- 7:30 a.m.: **Soroptimist Int'l of Downey**, for information, call Pat Heineke, 904-3534.
- 10 a.m.: **Downey Bocce Club**, at 7850 Quill Drive, for information call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.
- 12 p.m.: **Kiwanis Club of Downey**, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 923-0971.
- 12:30 p.m.: **Take off Pounds Sensibly**, at First Christian Church, call (800) 932-8677.
- 6:30 p.m.: **Downey United Masonic Lodge # 220**, 8244 3rd St., Call 862-4176.
- 7 p.m.: **Troop 351, Boy Scouts of America**, at First Baptist Church, for information call 776-3388.
- 2nd Thurs., 7:30 p.m.: **Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club**, for more information call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.
- 4th Thurs., 10 a.m.: **Assistance League**, at Casa De Parley Johnson. for information call 869-0232.
- 4th Thurs., 7:30 p.m.: **Downey Historical Society programs**, at Community Center. Call 862-2777.

#### Fridays

- 7:30 a.m.: **Pro Networkers**, at Mimi's Cafe, for information call Barbara Briley Beard at 869-7618
- 3rd Fri., 8:30 a.m.: **Women's "In His Glory" Ministry** at Los Amigos C. C. (562) 622-3785.

#### Saturdays

- 9 a.m.: **Farmers Market**, Second Street at New Avenue, for information call (562) 904-7246.
- 10 a.m.: **Downey Bocce Club**, at 7850 Quill Drive, for information call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.
- 2nd Sat., 12:30 p.m.: **AAUW**, Los Amigos Country Club.

## On This Day...

- Jan. 8, 1918:** President Woodrow Wilson, in a speech before Congress, outlines his 14 points for peace following World War I.
- 1962:** Leonardo Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" is exhibited in the U.S. for the first time at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.
- 1964:** President Lyndon Johnson announces a "war on poverty."
- 2002:** The No Child Left Behind Act is signed into law by President George W. Bush.
- Birthdays:** Game show host Bob Eubanks (72), physicist Stephen Hawking (68), rock singer David Bowie (63), singer R. Kelly (43), baseball player Jason Giambi (39) and actress Rachel Nichols (30).

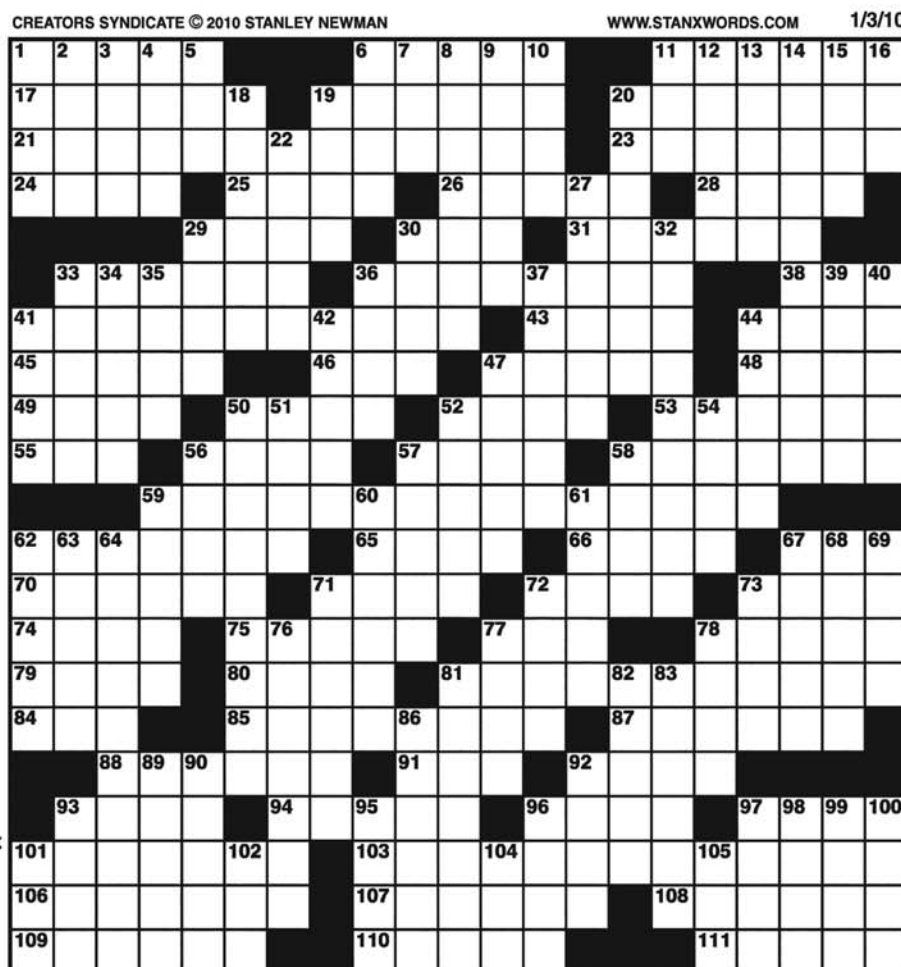
## THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)

**SQUARE ROUTES:** Nine well-known ways

by Robert H. Wolfe

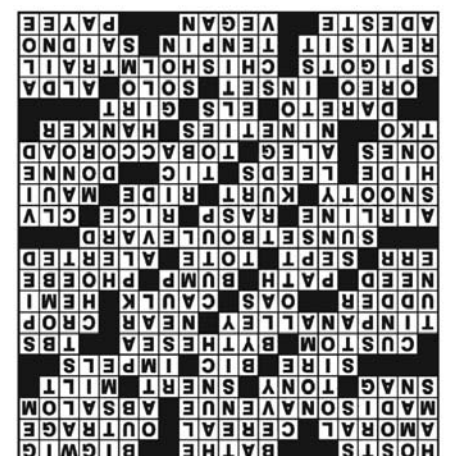
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You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at his e-mail address: StanXwords@aol.com. Or write him at P.O. Box 69, Massapequa Park, NY 11762, Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you'd like a reply.

Discovered by Dizzy Gillespie, vibraphonist MILT JACKSON (28 Across) is considered to be one of the most important figures in bebop. The quote "DO I DARE TO eat a peach?" (88 Across) is from T.S. Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Michael Douglas (14 Down) will be reprising his Oscar-winning role in a Wall Street sequel, due later this year.



## Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer



As promised, my current series of articles are devoted to specific health promotion plans for different groups. Health issues that may afflict us depend to an enormous extent on our gender and age, as well as genetics, environment and health habits.

Today, let's address recommendations for women over 50. Of course, many of these basic measures are strongly suggested for anyone:

- Be tobacco free. The first step is deciding to quit, and for some, that's all it takes. Many, however, have more success with various medications. The old standards typically involve some form of nicotine, whether it be administered through a patch, gum, or cigarette-type device. Chantix is the newest medication; work with your doctor to choose the best treatment for you.

- Be physically active. If you aren't already, begin today. Start with small steps and advance gradually. Park your car further away from your destination...Use the stairs instead of the elevator...Take your children or grandchildren for a walk or to the park. In order to be physically active, you must think of yourself as an active person. This may involve a significant shift in your mind-set!

- Consume a healthy diet. Simply put, consume "real" food, not processed food. The more real the food, the more nutritionally valuable it is. Make sure that these foods are a major part of your diet: beans, nuts, fruit, vegetables, soy, low or no-fat dairy, fish, chicken, turkey, and 100% whole grains. Say no to saturated fats, trans fats, fast foods, snack foods, salt and sugar.

- Stay at a healthy weight. If your weight is rising, you are consuming more calories than your body, genetics, and level of activity

demand. Balance the calories you consume with the lifestyle you lead.

- Drink alcohol in moderation. If you are over 65, consume no more than one drink per day. If you are under 65, two drinks is your maximum. Remember that one 12-ounce beer is the same as either five ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor.

- Take baby aspirin IF it is indicated for you for the prevention of atherosclerosis related diseases such as stroke and heart attack. Ask your doctor whether your own unique risk factors justify taking a medication that does have side effects, such as the possibility of bleeding ulcers.

- Some women have such a significant family history of breast cancer (multiple close family members) that they may consider taking medication for prevention of breast cancer. Again, speak with your own physician.

- Menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, depression and fatigue can be debilitating. Estrogen replacement therapy (ERT) can combat these symptoms, but has become unpopular due to recent data suggesting greater cancer, stroke, and heart attack risk. Discuss this with your doctor.

- The annual flu vaccine is recommended for women over 50. There are also vaccinations for pneumonia and shingles. Tetanus vaccines are recommended every ten years for everybody. Ask your doctor which immunizations are appropriate for you.

Screening tests are extremely important:

- For breast cancer prevention, you should perform a breast self-exam at least once per month. If you are unclear about how to do it, ask your doctor for instructions. In addition, your doctor will do a breast exam at least once per year. Mammograms should be performed every year or two.

- To screen for cervical cancer, Pap smears are recommended every one to three years until age 65. After that, the recommended frequency is controversial, however a history of abnormal Pap smears will certainly increase how often you should have one.

- Colorectal cancer is now screened in a few different ways. A rectal exam will be performed at your annual physical. If blood is found, or a mass is felt, then a

colonoscopy will be performed. In addition, at age 50, it is recommended that everyone get their first screening colonoscopy.

- Diabetes is screened through a blood sample taken after fasting. This test is typically part of routine labs taken by your doctor during your physical.

- High blood pressure can be detected when your doctor measures your blood pressure. Remember that regular exercise lowers blood pressure, and that salt, weight gain, and stress raise it. Your genetics are probably the most important factor in causing elevated blood pressure.

- Cholesterol levels are screened by a blood test. This too is typically part of the routine labs taken during your yearly physical. Many factors affect cholesterol, including genetics, diet, and exercise. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as fish, nuts, and dark green vegetables have shown promise in improving your cholesterol levels.

- Your doctor will order a Bone Mineral Density or DEXA scan to screen for osteoporosis. The risk of osteoporosis becomes more significant during menopause. Until age 25, bone is built, and after age 25 it begins to break down. This process accelerates after menopause due to the loss of estrogen. Exercise is very helpful, and be sure you are taking calcium and vitamin D as recommended by your doctor.

- If you are sexually active outside of a monogamous relationship, you should be screened for sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, genital warts and herpes.

If you wish, make up a checklist of these screening tests, and fill it in during your yearly physical. Your doctor will comment on the tests results, and what measures need to be taken to correct any problems found.

Remember what they say about an ounce of prevention. Good health to you all!

*Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and current chief of medicine at Downey Regional Medical Center. Write to him in care of this newspaper at 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240.*

## The benefits of Vitamin D

What if there was one pill you could take that could possibly help reduce your risk for 17 types of cancer, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, osteoporosis, and childhood asthma – and it wasn't a prescription drug? It's a pill that some recent studies indicate could lower the incidence of breast cancer by as much as 50 percent and reduce our national cost of cancer treatment by \$25 billion annually, while costing consumers only pennies a day.

That pill exists, according to Dr. Soram Khalsa a member of the medical staff at Cedars Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. It's Vitamin D, a nutrient that has been in common use since the 1920s, and new data suggests it could help stem the tide of many chronic conditions at a cost of under 10 cents a day.

Khalsa — a board-certified internist, 30-year practitioner and pioneer of integrative medicine and author of the book "The Vitamin D Revolution" from Hay House (vitamindrevolution.com) — knows that the lack of Vitamin D in Americans has been cited as a factor in just about every major ailment suffered by Americans, and he is on a crusade to stop the trend before millions more suffer.

Khalsa believes that the U.S. recommended daily allowance (RDA) of Vitamin D is outdated and too low, based on the long standing premise that Vitamin D only helps fight rickets. "In the past ten years, medical science has discovered that Vitamin D in higher doses can help prevent numerous other illnesses, yet the RDA does not reflect that new understanding. Simply put, the government is behind the curve."

"The world's best Vitamin D researchers are convinced that as

many as one billion people worldwide are deficient in Vitamin D," Khalsa said. "Vitamin D deficiency has been implicated in conditions including cancer, coronary artery disease and even chronic pain. Estimates indicate that the economic burden of Vitamin D deficiency in the U.S. alone could cost between \$40 - \$56 billion annually. The bottom line is that dozens of scientific studies have proclaimed resoundingly that the incidence of these illnesses is lower in people with higher levels of Vitamin D in their systems, and is higher in those who lack it. It's just that simple."

"By increasing one's Vitamin D levels from the currently accepted range of 20 nanograms per milliliter (ng/ml) in their blood to a range of about 40 ng/ml - 70 ng/ml, the risk of cancer and other Vitamin D long-latency deficiency diseases can be reduced. It is now known that most organs, in the body have Vitamin D receptors. Vitamin D, which is really a hormone and not really a vitamin at all, circulates throughout the body and interacts with cells, tissue and organs. Researchers are now finding that Vitamin D interacts with more than 2,000 genes – Vitamin D is the only substance of its kind in the body."

Khalsa added that the best way to find out if you are Vitamin D deficient is through a simple blood test you can request from your physician or even perform with a home test kit. Some of the symptoms of very low Vitamin D levels can include:

- Muscular weakness
- Feeling of heaviness in the legs
- Chronic musculoskeletal pain
- Fatigue
- Frequent infections

• Depression  
In 2002, the Journal of the American Medical Association urged adults to take a daily multivitamin. With the same urgency, Khalsa would like to see every adult taking 1000 IU – 2000 IU per day of Vitamin D as part of their wellness regimen. "Although most of the evidence that vitamin D helps protect against cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis is retrospective and epidemiological, there is no harm in taking a higher dose now while the prospective studies are being carried out. At most, the extra vitamin D will do no harm. At best, it will probably bring us great benefit."

"Because of the vast lack of access to basic healthcare, we have a massive population of people who walk around like ticking time bombs," he said. "They don't feel good, and don't know why, but because their health issues aren't debilitating or pressing, they don't seek out medical care that is either too expensive or just plain not available. As a result, their risk for an immense array of illnesses skyrockets while they find it easy to ignore their own need for care. By adopting an integrative model of health care that incorporates safe and accepted self-care and complementary medicine strategies like adding Vitamin D, consumers can actively participate in managing their health – proactively mitigating certain risks and improving the quality of their daily lives."

*Dr. Soram Khalsa is a board-certified internist on the medical staff at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and a 30-year veteran in the practice of integrative medicine.*

## Tips to achieve your New Year's resolution

With the holiday season behind us, many Americans have shifted their focus to setting their "New Year's Resolutions". The problem is, more often than not, people give-up within the first few months. This year, University of Phoenix will help you reach your goals and keep your resolutions with 7 easy tips!

1. Evaluate 2009 for success and failures: Sit down with a pen and paper and think about January through December of 2009, and write down your successes in one column and your failures in another.

2. Identify what could have been done differently: For the "failures" column, identify what you could have done differently in order to avoid that failure. Next, identify what you did in order to accomplish your "successes".

3. Determine goals and keep it simple: Write down which steps you want to implement. Remember, don't set yourself up for failure by setting unrealistic goals; simplicity is key. Your simple goals will help you achieve your larger, long term goals. Take it

one step at a time.

4. Keep steps focused on the solution: We've heard the saying "keep your eye on the ball" for a reason – its good advice!

5. Have a Plan and track your progress: Buy a calendar so you can plan your actions for the coming weeks or months, and decide when and how often to evaluate. Then, record whether or not you stick to that plan. Keep track of each small success you make toward reaching your larger goal and it write it down so you can reflect on your progress.

6. Predict potential disasters: Decide how you will deal with the temptations that will sidetrack you from your resolutions. This could include calling on a friend for help,

practicing positive thinking, and self-talk. In addition, it is best to tell your friends or family about your resolutions because having a support group will help you stay motivated and on track.

7. Reward yourself: Celebrate your success by treating yourself to something that you enjoy, but will not contradict your resolution.

*Contributed by the University of Phoenix.*

## Web safety topic of discussion

**WHITTIER** – Talk show host and child safety advocate Mike Davis will host a Web safety presentation Tuesday at the SEE's Things Green Learning Center, 12402 Penn St., in Whittier.

Davis will speak about a new software company that helps parents protect their children while online and on their cell phones.

The company, called Web Safety, detects potential online threats and sends an immediate text message to the child's parents, alerting them of the threat.

The program can also prevent teens from texting while driving.

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For more information, or to RSVP, call Davis at (562) 945-6469.

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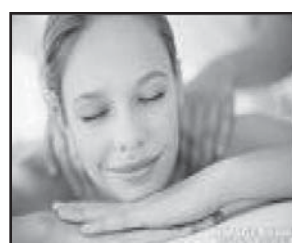
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## Holidays are kind to Warren boys

BY JOSEPH APODACA,  
SPORTS INTERN

**DOWNEY** – While everyone was busy enjoying gift exchange parties and much needed rest, the holiday hiatus did not stop the Warren boys' basketball team from competing in three tournament games over the holiday break.

In a tight game against Gladstone last Thursday, Warren managed to squeak by with a 57-53 win.

The Bears also took on El Monte High School, winning 61-31 the day after Christmas. El Monte's Edward Landeros was the only scorer in double digits with 16 points.

The Bears' defense only allowed two El Monte players to score more than one field goal in their romp.

They then continued on against Poly High School from Pasadena, losing by just four points 60-56 and also against Lawndale High School, where the Bears lost 54-47.

The Bears are now 8-7 for their overall season, which includes non-conference and tournament games.

The Bears have yet to host a game on their own court, playing mainly in neutral and away locations for their tournament season. The team has fared better at mutu-

al locations as opposed to playing at their rival's own court, winning in games against Firebaugh 66-31, Sierra Vista High from Baldwin Park 61-50, and South High from Torrance 51-42. They have previously lost to North High from Riverside 49-58 and Narbonne High from Harbor City 35-38 in their tournament efforts.

Junior Cejay Anderson remains the team's leading scorer while senior point guard Moises Benitez continues to impress as a key scorer for the season. Captain Eddie Romero continues to collect rebounds off errant shots, eliminating many second chance points and allowing the Bears to come down the court and run their offense.

The Bears' defense has improved from last year, and sharing the ball while on offense is not an uncommon thing. Also, Warren's zone defense has been reinforced and is looking more confident compared to last year's team.

With just about a month left in their season, the Bears are about to enter into their conference games, beginning Wednesday against the Dominguez Dons. Warren has not beaten the Dons in over five years and haven't been within 10 points in the previous 10 contests.

Information from staff writer Scott Cobos was used in this report.

## Dominguez: weakened but still tough

BY SCOTT COBOS,  
STAFF WRITER

**DOWNEY** – Last year the Downey boys' basketball team flew out to Orlando, Fla. to compete against some of the top notch basketball programs in the country. This year, they stayed close to home and competed against some pretty decent teams in their own right but were only able to split their 4-game appearance.

In games that saw Downey beat Workman 54-46 and Fullerton 43-41, the more curious subject isn't the 47-31 loss to Ayala, but the 55-49 loss to Dominguez, a team that has traditionally dominated Downey and any team in the San Gabriel Valley League.

One must ask if we're finally seeing the dynasty that is Dominguez basketball finally start to burn like Rome.

Dami Adefeso led the way for the Vikings in their loss with 23 points on a white-hot 10 of 14 shooting night. While Adefeso had a performance that might rank up with one of the best of the year for the Vikings, it was the small slip

up in the second quarter that brought the demise of Downey on this night.

After one quarter, Downey and Dominguez were tied at 9-9. But in the second quarter, Dominguez gave them self some breathing room going into halftime after a 13-point second quarter that also saw Downey score only seven points.

Downey rebounded in the third quarter and juiced up their offense scoring 13 points, but Dominguez had the same thing in mind and they scored 17 points, practically putting the game on ice.

Known for a few last quarter comebacks and scares, the Vikings were at it again, this time scoring 20 points in the final quarter and looking all the part ready for their first win over the Dons in years. But it wasn't meant to be with Dominguez scoring 16 points in the final quarter, just enough to edge Downey and keep them winless against them in over five years.

In their 43-41 win over Fullerton, it was Edgar Ruiz who came to the rescue, this time scor-

ing a season-high 22 points on 7 of 11 shooting.

Instead of pulling a late game comeback, this time Downey was able to get ahead and hold on for the win. Downey going into the second half was up by a point, 22-21. It was their third quarter run where they scored 15 points that put them ahead for good.

The Vikings ate a lot of clock and while they only scored 6 points in the final quarter, only allowed 11 points to Fullerton which was just enough to preserve their win.

Downey's most balanced and polished game came against Workman where a slow start offensively and defensively sparked an offense outburst and woke up the defense.

Workman came out firing and was up 19-14 after the first quarter, but after that Downey put the screws on them defensively allowing 4 points in the second quarter and 7 points in the third quarter.

The Vikings had three players score in double digits with Tyler Ellis leading the way with 19 points, doing his damage from

behind the 3-point line and sinking free throws.

David Rivera had 10 points and Erick Gomez had 15 points to help round off Downey's best all-around game in the tournament. Although the Vikings shot under 45 percent on the game, it didn't matter with them keeping Workman under 40 percent.

Downey's next game will be their first San Gabriel Valley League game, opening up at Gahr next Wednesday at 7 p.m.

## WDLL adds additional sign-up dates

**DOWNEY** – West Downey Little League has added additional sign-up dates for the upcoming season.

Registration will be taken Monday and Tuesday from 6 to 8 p.m. at the West Middle School cafeteria.

West Middle School is at 11985 Old River School Rd.

## Lady Vikings sent home winless

BY ALYSSA WYNNE,  
SPORTS INTERN

**DOWNEY** – After competing in the Palm Springs High School Winter Basketball Classic last week, the Lady Vikings were not able to come home with big smiles of victory.

Rather, their basketball game against Rialto, Yucca Valley and Indio were losing ones.

Downey's loss to Rialto on the first day was surely not a strong way to begin the tournament. At the end of the first quarter, Downey and Rialto were both tied and the odds seemed to be on Rialto's side with their 7-victory record. Any hope of victory was crushed when Rialto scored in the double digits by the end of third quarter and brought its score up to 34. With only 12 minutes remaining in the game Downey put as much effort into the quarter as possible but was unable to put together a run to compensate for the poor start to the second half and lost 52-30.

The next day did not bring much promise with it either. Downey's game against West High in Torrance was also a losing one.

West's 5-victory record at this point in the tournament matched that of Downey's. In a game that seemed to be favored in Downey's direction, the Vikings were caught off guard and lost.

Last Thursday marked Downey's third game in the tournament, this time against the Yucca Valley Trojans. The game was very much teeter-tottering in all four quarters with neither team really breaking away.

By halftime, Downey was a mere four points down but they were only able to score half of that in the third quarter. Downey scored an overwhelming 25 points in the fourth quarter, but their effort came just too late once again. The Vikings lost to the Trojans 50-45.

New Years Eve was not a day to be celebrated for the Vikings when they came across yet another failed attempt at victory, this time losing to Indio High School, 64-51.

Downey started out strong with a lead by the end of the first quarter but was unable to keep it up and they were down 10 points as the fourth quarter got under way.

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## Downey's up-and-down season continues

BY ALYSSA WYNNE,  
SPORTS INTERN

**DOWNEY** – Victory marked the beginning and conclusion for Downey in the North Orange County Soccer Tournament as the Lady Vikings beat Magnolia and Rancho Alamitos, though they lost against Serrano and Pacifica.

The Sentinels traveled from Anaheim to Downey to face the Vikings. Downey's adversary came into the game with a record of 4-1. Downey fired a total of 16 shots on their opponent's goal and forward Brandi Neilan was the lady victorious in making the ball soar in. Magnolia, on the other hand, only had three shots attempted on Downey's goalkeeper Lorena Ruiz. Defensive player Brianna Bobadilla aided her team by saving 10 shots from reaching Downey's goalie. The game was certainly a rough and perhaps violent one with the Vikings committing 16 fouls

and their opponents only six. The Vikings managed to hang on though, winning 1-0.

Last Monday the Serrano Diamondbacks slithered into a victory against the Vikings. Ruiz was out for this game and substituted goalie Adrianna Salazar, was still able to keep up the effort by saving six shots on goal. Midfielder Crystal Fresquez made an unsuccessful corner kick and of the six shots otherwise fired on Serrano's goal, none went in. Downey left this match with a 1-0 loss.

Downey's third game into the tournament was also a loss, this time against Pacifica. Forward Krystal Rojas had three attempted shots and Neilan had four, but there were no goals made from either side. The final score ended with a 0-0 tie. According to tournament rules, in order to save time, the ladies are then supposed to conduct a round of penalty kicks on one another's goals. Downey went first

and made their goal, as did Serrano. But the Vikings were only able to make two of the five penalty kicks given, and Serrano beat them by earning four shots.

The misfortune ended there when the Lady Vikings entered their fourth and final game on Tuesday of last week against Rancho Alamitos High School. Fresquez had an overwhelming seven shots on Rancho's goal and found the back of the net with one of her shots. Her teammate, Neilan, made the other goal against the team. Downey committed three fouls against Rancho—as well as one offside—but still reaped the benefit from the game after winning 2-0.

The ladies took the field again on Thursday against St. Joseph's High School for their last non-league game, but results were not yet available as of press time.

## 7 is Warren's lucky number

BY SCOTT COBOS,  
STAFF WRITER

**DOWNEY** – Currently on a 7-game winning streak, Warren's girls' basketball keeps rolling with their latest win over Los Osos 63-46 last Tuesday in the Cantwell Basketball Tournament.

After a slow start being down by 2 points at the first quarter break, Warren woke up and outscored Los Osos 48-29 the rest of the way with the Bears pushing the pace and wrapping up their first

tournament championship this season.

Warren's Justene Reyes led all scorers with 20 points and shot 73 percent from the field. She had more than enough help from Tahja Matthews who scored 19 points and shot 54 percent, doing most of her work from behind the 3-point line.

The two of them together outscored Los Osos entire team through three quarters and helped Warren cruise to yet again another win.

The flood gates for Warren opened in the second quarter when the Bears outscored Los Osos by 10 points and did more of the same in the third quarter outscoring them by 11 points.

At that point, all Warren had to do was eat up clock in the fourth quarter and cruise to their championship.

Warren is now 12-3 and will begin league play on Wednesday, traveling to Dominguez to open up in the San Gabriel Valley League. Game time is 7 p.m.

## SGVL Boys Basketball Preview: Gahr has makings of a champion

BY SCOTT COBOS,  
STAFF WRITER

For years and years it's been Dominguez this and Dominguez that. It's been the stories of Tayshaun Prince and Tyson Chandler, but one begs to ask the question after watching their play in non-conference games, is it time for Dominguez to step aside?

If Gahr has anything to do with it, the answer is yes, and while Downey and Warren will be waiting in the shadows to gobble up a possible playoff berth, it will be the Gladiators that take the SGVL this year.

Last year, Gahr finished 6-4 in league but was loud about it. Normally a very fast and athletic team, Gahr had three players average 12 or more points per game. Devin Golston led the way scoring 24.4 points per game and a young Davon Potts was starting to really develop scoring 13 points per game, but only because Golston did the majority of the scoring.

This year, Potts has taken over averaging an eerie 24.4 points per game like Golston. Potts has help though, more than Golston had last year with three other players averaging 10 or more points per game. Anthony Martinez is chipping in 10 points per game and Ervin Ware is scoring 18 points per game while Chales Nebo Jr. is tossing in 15 per game.

Gahr's offense is going to run teams out of gyms and it's quite possible that they won't even be touched in the SGVL and go 10-0 after league play is all said and done. After all, they are ranked No. 17 in the state.

Lynwood has a stud of their own in Raymond Alexander III who is scoring 24 points per game. Now while Alexander doesn't have

the support around him that Potts has, it shouldn't be surprising for Lynwood to finish second in league play and wrap up a playoff spot earlier than expected.

The only way Gahr might slip up is against a team that has a big scorer and out of all the teams in the league, Lynwood is the only one with a legitimate scoring threat. In basketball, there is the threat that one player can take over a game and put a team on his back and win. Lynwood is the only one that has that big punch threat.

Paramount will surprise a lot of teams this year and could possibly be the sleeper in the league. Always known as a down and gritty type team, Paramount is having one of their better non-conference appearances in quite some time. While they don't have that big bopper on offense, they do spread the ball around enough to keep teams off balance.

The Pirates have shown that they can run with the big boys, and if necessary grind it out as well. They might not be as skilled as Lynwood or as talented as Gahr, but they are an overall better team than Warren, Downey, and Dominguez at this point. A third place finish and a playoff spot should be in reach for the Pirates.

Warren will get the boost that they need this year with new head coach Ryan Hart. A fresh start for the Bears' program will be good for their health after the messy and somewhat mysterious firing of last year's head coach Brent Willis. So far, the Bears are having a pretty good non-conference run and with the fall of Downey and the mighty fall of Dominguez, there might be an outside shot of sneaking into the playoffs like Downey has the last couple seasons. But any improvement from the past two years in league play will be great for the

Bears.

It will be fun to watch this team as they finally get off the mat and grab their first league win in over a year and a half. While a fourth place finish might still taste bitter to the Bears, let's not forget how bad they've been in league play for the past couple years. Finishing fourth should feel like finishing first right now.

Downey's playoff Cinderella story may finally be over. After sneaking in the last two years with at-large bids, they finally may have run out of players to pull up into the spotlight. They lost Matt Black and Matt Taylor, both players who were massive parts to the Vikings getting into the playoffs. The Vikings now lack size in the middle of the court and will force their jump shooters to be on target every night.

It will be a tall task for the Vikings to overcome, but if head coach Larry Shelton has taught us anything, it's all about execution and heart on the court that grabs wins. While a playoff berth and higher than a fifth place finish looks grim, don't be surprised if the Vikings have some success anyway.

Talk about a fall from grace. From king of the mountain to cellar rat, Dominguez is possibly having one of the worst falls in recent memory. Only 2-6 on the season, Dominguez's talent pool has finally run dry. They barely beat Downey in one of their wins, but even then they probably shouldn't have won that game. Finally we're starting to see the change of guard in the SGVL starting with the all mighty Dominguez staring at a last place finish in league play for the first time in over a decade.