



The Downey Patriot



Downey grad in the Air Force
See Page 2



Warren girls trump Downey
See Page 8



A smile worth bragging about
See Page 4

Friday, February 8, 2008

Vol. 6 No. 42

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

Barbara Briley-Beard has no dearth of dreams

BY HENRY VENERACION, STAFF WRITER

Barbara Briley-Beard, long known in Downey as a successful insurance agent/broker with Farmers Insurance and a realtor with Action Realty & Investment, admits to “burning the candle at both ends.”



Barbara Briley-Beard

Besides being engaged in these down-right stressful business pursuits for well-nigh 26-1/2 years in one and 12 years in the other, Barbara has at the same time been actively involved for years with the following service organizations: the Downey Family YMCA (on the board for 22 years, served as board chair for three years, teams campaign chair, ran Christian Emphasis Committee for three years); the Woman’s Club of Downey (has served in every position, been president four times, currently vice-president); P.E.O. (president three years, chaplain, and currently Recording Secretary); American Cancer Society (president this year of the Downey Rio Hondo Unit); and served for many years on the Downey Hospital Board. On top of all this, she founded and has served as president off and on for 16 years of Connections Networking Group, as well as started Pro Networkers Group in 1990 and now serving as president for seventh year.

She’s no slouch at home, either. Writing poetry, a favorite hobby, has for example been eclipsed by painting. “I paint in the middle of the night, everywhere in the house, really every chance I get,” she says. On a family visit to Michigan two years ago, she and a cousin went to a nearby town to attend an art class. The group was instructed to paint an enchanted forest. Looking at Barbara’s painting, the art instructor told her: “Anyone can paint height and width, but very few can paint depth. You are one of the few. Don’t quit.” Barbara didn’t. Not only was she hooked, but she has instigated an art class over at the Woman’s Club, if only to further develop her artistic talent.

An art connoisseur recently tried to purchase one of her oil paintings, which she had displayed at the Cerritos Library, for a goodly sum. She declined the offer, explaining that she painted only for her own pleasure, and wanted to keep it for herself. Her other passion is fishing. She has always enjoyed horseback riding, harking back to her early days in Hart, Michigan (pop. 5,600), where she grew up. Another absorbing pastime is, of course, reading (the Bible, Joseph Wambaugh, biographies). “I’m a romantic. I cry at good movies (favorite movie: ‘An Affair to Remember’ with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr) and when I hear a sad story. I believe in love, that there’s good in everybody,” she says.

The idea of doing 10 things before you die is not new, of course, at least not with her. She drew up a ‘bucket list’ of “must-do’s” when her

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Memories spark feelings of patriotism

BY ERIC PIERCE, CITY EDITOR

I had the pleasure last Saturday of volunteering with the Downey City Library as they interviewed local World War II veterans, part of the library’s “One Book, One Community” project that encourages the entire community to read the same book at the same time, in this case Tom Brokaw’s national bestseller “The Greatest Generation.”

Librarian Nancy Messineo thanked me for my help, although I feel I’m the one who benefited most from the experience.

The man I interviewed (last name Price) was a Marine Corp. veteran, having spent three years as a mortar gunman fighting overseas, primarily in Okinawa.

As Price remembers it, he was driving through Victorville with a couple of buddies one day when an announcement broke through the radio that Japanese warplanes had staged an attack on Pearl Harbor.

“At the time I didn’t know Pearl Harbor even belonged to us,” said Price, now a Norwalk resident. “Then we realized, hey, that’s us! We were livid to say the least. The whole country was livid.”

Outraged, Price said he and his friends snuck out of school and tried to enlist in the Marines, but were sent home by a recruiter because they were not yet 18. In the meantime, his grandparents offered him a farming job in Missouri to escape being drafted.

“In those days, farmers weren’t drafted and were allowed to stay home,” said Price. “People had to eat, I guess.”

Price declined the farming offer. A patriot since birth, Price knew it was his American duty to serve his country, especially during a time of national crisis. When he turned 18, Price joined the Marines.

The plane ride to Okinawa was “scary,” Price said, the experiences upon arrival even scarier. Rain battered Price and his fellow Marines, creating a blanket of thick mud that made it difficult to walk. His senses were heightened (by fear and training...possibly both), constantly on the lookout for anything and everything out of the ordinary.

Price recalled one time being staged at the banks of a river, a large cane field in front of them, when he heard the ominous sounds of snapping twigs.

“I knew it wasn’t mosquitoes,” said Price.

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Voters strike down Measure G

■ Residents overwhelmingly reject City Council bid to extend local term limits.

BY ERIC PIERCE, CITY EDITOR

DOWNEY – Eight years, citizens have decided, is long enough. Downey residents overwhelmingly rejected a controversial measure Tuesday that would have amended the city charter to allow City Council members significantly more time in office.

Measure G was defeated with close to 68 percent of the vote. “I’m obviously disappointed, but the democratic process worked,” said Mayor Pro Tem Mario Guerra, a second-year council member who introduced the measure last year. “I’m very proud of our campaign and the way we went about our business. I’m very surprised, but I believe in the democratic process. The people have spoken.”

Councilwoman Anne Bayer, who championed opposition efforts against Measure G, did not return calls for comment.

Had Measure G passed, council members could have served three consecutive terms of four years each (12 years total). Measure G also would have allowed a council member to seek reelection after a two-year “waiting out” period.

With 100 percent of the precincts reporting, 12,597 votes were cast against Measure G, compared to 6,051 in favor, according to the Los Angeles County Registrar.

A total of 42,704 people were registered to vote. “As far as I’m concerned, Guerra flushed \$85,000 [the cost of the election] down the toilet,” Mike Prokop, head of Citizens Against Senseless Reform, told the *Herald American*. “We could have used that money to a lot of other uses.”

Measure G’s defeat means council members Kirk Cartozian and Rick Trejo will be termed out of office this November. Bayer will be termed out in 2010, while Guerra still has two years left on his first term.

Mayor David Gafin has said he will seek reelection for a second term. “The people have spoken and have made it clear they do not want any change in the current city charter,” Cartozian said in a written statement. “I respect the will of the people and the democratic process. Even though the outcome was contrary to my view, I am happy that it encouraged more people to formulate opinion on a local measure. That is a good thing. Downey continues to move in the right direction.”

In their campaign literature, proponents of Measure G claimed Downey’s current system of term limits produced a “carousel of non-committed leaders.” Proponents also pointed to a history of unopposed elections as signs that term limit reform was necessary.

Among supporters of the reform were former council members



With all precincts reporting, Measure G lost at the polls by a 68-32 percent margin.

Meredith Perkins, Keith McCarthy and Gary McCaughan, along with school board members Willie Gutierrez and Bobbie Samperi.

Community philanthropist Dr. Mary Stauffer also threw her support behind the initiative.

Opponents, however, called the ballot measure self-serving and expensive, and said the same election could have been held in November at a much lower cost to citizens.

Local attorney Joe Lumsdaine and former council member Joe DiLoreto actively campaigned against altering Downey’s term limits. Other opponents included former council member Robert Brazelton, Planning Commissioner Terry Lambros, and local citizen Maria Larkin.

Stauffer Foundation approves 28 teacher grants

DOWNEY – Dr. Mary Stauffer, community philanthropist and supporter of the Downey Unified School District, recently approved and donated 28 teacher grants, totaling \$77,245.

Teachers were invited to apply and submit their applications for grants to address any academic need or interest. The goals of the grants were to encourage excellence, increase scholarships and improve the social environment of the school. In addition, grants could be written to fund the renewal or expansion of existing programs. Stauffer also indicated an interest in focusing some of the grant money for extracurricular or academic clubs and activities.

The Stauffer Foundation reviewed the applications in December and approved 28 grants, which will benefit 14 schools within DUSD. The winning grants addressed diverse instructional material needs, subject areas, and/or activities.

On Jan. 9, surrounded by those given grants at a Grant Implementation Meeting, Stauffer instructed the group to immediately spend the money for the requested purpose. She praised them for putting forth the extra effort and time to make their ideas a reality.

“After the parents, there is no person more important or influential than the teacher,” Stauffer said.



Dr. Mary Stauffer recently approved and donated 28 teacher grants, totaling \$77,245. Recipients met with Stauffer at a Grant Implementation Meeting on Jan. 9. Pictured are (first row, left to right) Ana Thorne, senior secretary; Denise Takano, director, Elementary Education and Teacher Support Programs; Stauffer, CEO, Mary R. Stauffer Foundation; and Wendy L. Doty, Ed.D., Superintendent; (second row) Monica Taylor, Rio Hondo Elementary School; Ron Legaspi, West Middle School; Sue Fuqua, Alameda Elementary School; Carla Shull, Unsworth Elementary School; Duen Rou Chen, Griffiths Middle School; Tina Carlson, Downey High School; Allyson Stella, East Middle School; Julie Yearsley, Gallatin Elementary School; Dianna Smith, Gallatin; Deborah Gee, Gallatin; and Jee Kang, Carpenter Elementary School; (third row) Caryn Fetzer, Rio Hondo; Dana Bosek, Unsworth; Regan Fisher, Lewis Elementary School; Ray Friedrich, Rio San Gabriel Elementary School; Christopher Donahue, West; Loren Driscoll, East; Kevin Dodge, East; Rebecca Cannady, Williams Elementary School; Esther Brossmer, Carpenter; and Robert Kaplinsky West; (fourth row) Kellie Acosta, Warren High School; Cindy Vega, Warren; Renee Berumen, Downey; Yvette Puente, Downey; Vivian Durkee, Downey; Julia Desalernos, West; Nathan Dunn, Downey; Kellie Russell, Griffiths; Jeff Klingelsmith, Griffiths; and Virginia Rooney, Columbus High School.

Vincent presents ‘An Update of History’

DOWNEY – John Vincent and the Downey Historical Society will present, “An Update of History,” chronicling the city from incorporation to before the Downey Landing, on Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the Barbara J. Riley Community & Senior Center.

Vintage 16mm color and black and white film from the late 1950’s and early 1960’s will be used throughout the presentation. The audience will also be asked to comment during the screening. Among the footage to be shown includes the Downey Rose Float, in Kodachrome, fire station and hospital dedications, Downey High School rally, and more.

Holiday Deadlines

The Downey Patriot will be closed Feb. 18 in observance of Presidents’ Day. Accordingly, the deadline for display advertising for the Feb. 22 issue will be Friday, Feb. 15.

The classified advertising deadline will remain the same, Wednesday, Feb. 20.

Sacks and Macedo to speak at meeting

DOWNEY – Harry Sacks of Pre-Paid Legal Services and Cesar Macedo of LPL Financial Services will speak at Tuesday's Rise 'N Shine networking group at Nordic Fox restaurant at 7:30 a.m. Cost is an order from the menu. For information, or to RSVP, call (562) 923-2191.

Communication discussed at Nordic Fox

DOWNEY – Brett Baughman of Niurka, Inc., will be discussing "My Communication is the Response I Get – Effective Communication Bridges Worlds," at the Feb. 26 Rise 'N Shine networking group at Nordic Fox restaurant at 7:30 a.m. Cost is an order from the menu. For information, or to RSVP, call (562) 923-2191.

'Friends' host annual membership week

DOWNEY – The Friends of the Downey City Library will be hosting their annual Valentine's Week Membership Drive from Feb. 10 to Feb. 16. A Friends' volunteer will be at a table inside the entrance to the library's adult section to answer questions and assist in filling out applications. Last year's members are encouraged to continue their membership in 2008 and new members will be actively recruited. Those signed up for a 2008 membership will be entered to win raffle items. The Downey City Library is located at 11121 Brookshire Ave. in Downey.

Cher Foundation hosts 'Spa Day'

DOWNEY – The Cher Foundation will be hosting a fundraiser, "Spa Day," at the Cher Clinic tomorrow from noon to 5 p.m. "Spa Day" is designed primarily for women; for \$5, participants will receive a 10 to 15 minute facial, as well as a massage, or a session of reflexology. Extended time is available for an additional fee. The community is invited to attend. CandleLite and Avon will also be participating. Participants can also purchase gift certificates – perfect for Valentine's Day, birthdays, anniversaries, and more. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Cher Clinic and the free and ability-to-pay services offered to the community. The Cher Clinic is located at 7444 Florence Ave., Suite H, in Downey. For more information, or to make an appointment, call (562) 777-1727. Spaces are limited, but walk-ins are welcome.

Lifeguard certification training offered

DOWNEY – The City of Downey Community Services Department will be offering an American Red Cross Certification course during spring break, March 24 – 28, at the Downey Aquatic Center at Downey High School. The course will be held each day, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The certified instructor will provide the necessary minimum skills training for a person to qualify to serve as a non-surf lifeguard. Participants must be at least 15 years of age on or before the beginning of the course and show proof of age at the time of registration. The cost for the week is \$105 which includes the training book, pocket mask and certification card. Registration began this week at the Community Services Department office, located at 11111 Brookshire Ave. For information, call (562) 904-7238.

THE DINNER LUNCH QUIZ

SOUND FAMILIAR?
LUNCH TODAY?
DINNER TONIGHT?
I AM TIRED OF CHAIN FAST FOOD -
I WANT A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE -
I WANT A COCKTAIL BEFORE MY MEAL -
I WANT FRIENDLY SERVICE -
I LIKE A HEATED PATIO -
I WANT FRESH SEAFOOD -
I FEEL LIKE A GREAT STEAK -
I WANT PIZZA!
I WANT PASTA!
I WANT TO SEE MY FRIENDS THERE -
CAN WE GET RESERVATIONS?
I DON'T WANT TO SPEND ALOT.
THE ANSWER IS ON PAGE 9



Air Force Airman Esteban Sifuentes recently graduated from basic training at Lackland Air Force Base. He is a 2007 graduate of Downey High School.

Sifuentes graduates from basic training

DOWNEY – Air Force Airman Esteban Sifuentes has graduated from basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. During the six weeks of training, Sifuentes studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs and courtesies. He also performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations. In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force. Sifuentes is a 2007 graduate of Downey High School and the son of Patricia Flores of Downey.

Toastmasters Club hosting open house

DOWNEY – Residents interested in improving their communication and speaking skills, as well as their leadership capabilities, are invited to attend the Toastmaster Club 587 open house on Feb. 19 and discover how a supportive environment can help you face your fear of public speaking. The open house will be held at First Baptist Church of Downey, room 116, at 6 p.m. Featured speakers will be Mayor David Gafin and Distinguished Toastmaster Norm Cook. The public is invited to attend and light refreshments will be served. For more information, call Fionnuala Anderson at (562) 928-2658 or John McAllister at (562) 500-7675.

VETERANS

Continued from page 1

The sounds were growing increasingly louder and closer, and Price heaved a grenade into the field. A flash of red and then – an enemy body flew into the sky. Another time Price was in the middle of combat when he saw an orange shell spiraling towards him, almost in slow motion. By the grace of God it missed him, but it hit a fellow rifleman standing inches away. The question of "Why him, why not me?" is not lost here. Another time Price remembers an enemy combatant stalking towards him. Price pointed his gun and emptied the chamber, firing shot after shot at the man. Not the most accurate shot the Marines have ever seen, he missed every time. Fearing for his life, Price threw a hand grenade at the man. Three years into his service, Price found out he was going home. "The sergeant said anybody with 69 points could go home," said Price. "You earned points for doing various things in the service. Well I took out my paper and pencil and added up my points and I had 69 points exactly. The sergeant came in and told us to line up against the wall. He started reading off names and called out mine. I was going home." Beyond the blood and guts, Price told stories of bonding and companionship, friendship and camaraderie. To this day, he keeps in touch with some of his fellow soldiers, spread out across the country. His friends. "But I only have three close friends left," Paul said. "Everyone else is pretty much gone." Indeed, World War II veterans are rapidly disappearing. While we have the opportunity, it is our pleasure and honor to hear their tales of heroism and heartbreak. All you have to do is ask.

The Downey City Library will be exhibiting stories and memories of local World War II veterans beginning next month.

Folk music jam at Community Center

DOWNEY – Musicians, singers and music lovers in general are invited to a "Downey Folk Music Jam" on Feb. 26 at the Barbara J. Riley Community & Senior Center from 6:30 to 9 p.m. At a folk music jam, participants sit in a circle formation with their acoustic instruments. A facilitator ensures that the "lead" participant has their opportunity to lead the tune, pass, or request the group play a tune with someone else leading the music. The facilitator also ensures a continuum of activity throughout the jam, and that the leader position rotates smoothly around the circle. Guests and other non-musician visitors may sit outside the circle and listen to the music or sing along if appropriate. The round-robin format continues throughout the session and musicians may join or leave at will. The community is invited to the free jam. For more information, call Bea or Jim at (562) 861-7049.

Scholarships available to local seniors

DOWNEY – The Assistance League of Downey is once again offering \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors from Downey Unified School District high schools who have excelled as volunteers. To qualify, students must have a 3.0 GPA and be in good standing, which includes citizenship and attendance. Applications are available at each high school's guidance office. Completed applications should be mailed to the Assistance League of Downey, Scholarship Award Committee, 11026 Downey Ave., Downey, 90241. Applications must be postmarked by March 31; members of the League or their relatives (including Assistees) are not eligible. Awards will be announced at the annual awards assembly scheduled at their respective high school at the end of this school year.

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If you are Success-Oriented and want to increase your business, Connections meet each Thursday at 7:30am at NORDIC FOX, 10924 Paramount Blvd (at the corner of 3rd Street) in Downey. Call for information (562) 869-1414

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- Additional Programs: Keyboard Lessons, Dance Class and Manners/Etiquette Classes, Offered At Cost
- Before and After School Child Care Available 6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Assessment for the 2008/2009 school year for Kindergarten and all grades starts March 8, 2008. Call the school office at (562) 869-7213 for an appointment, more information and a personal tour of the school. Visit us on the Web at info@stmarkschooldowney.com

Downey Regional Medical Center
2008 Cardiovascular Wellness Fair
Saturday, February 23, 2008
9 a.m. to 12 noon DRMC Conference Rooms
(located in the main building basement)

Featuring a lecture by  **Dr. Jack Dobkin, D.O.**
Interventional Cardiologist

Activities include:

- Carotid screenings
- Blood pressure checks
- Respiratory screening
- Consultations with a DRMC pharmacist
- Nutrition Consultations
- Diabetes Educator (Elsa Saucedo, RN, MSN)
- Massages
- Giveaways
- Door Prizes
- Come early for a heart-healthy snack!

 **Downey Regional Medical Center**
 Your Community Hospital
 11500 Brookshire Avenue
 Downey, CA 90241
www.drnci.org



For more information, contact DRMC's Cardiac Rehab department at 562-904-5413.

BRILEY-BEARD

Continued from page 1

son, Jason, was born on March 7, 1975. Her list contained, not ten, but 500, things that really matter to her. So far she has crossed 257 items off her list; 243 still remain. The next three on her list: a trip to Paris, to see the Louvre; sell a piece of property both in Michigan and California at the same time (she is licensed in both places); and re-buy a Corvette (she has owned at least three Corvettes, including a 1964 Coupe Stingray, over the years).

At her present pace, she will barely finish her list when she turns 85. Even if she were to speed it up, to, say, about 10 items a year, she's looking at age 75 when she gets done.

She attributes her earthly success to following the compelling lessons of "The Richest Man in Babylon": Of one's total earnings, save 10 percent; tith 10 percent, set aside 10 percent for education; and live on the remaining 70 percent; then you can retire at age 62, because you have planned well.

A converted Methodist, Barbara calls her adoptive dad and Hart native, Bernard Peters, now 80, her hero. She says of her dad who was then an Air Force pilot stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu: "He always told us kids we could be anything we wanted to be when we grew up, even president. He is the person who has always been there for us, no matter what, and family comes first, after God. My dad is the person who taught me people don't really care how much you know, until they know how much you care." Sgt. Peters married her divorced mother and adopted Barbara. She was four years old.

Her dad's first biological offspring wasn't to arrive until five years later. All in all, Barbara was to have four more siblings. All reside in Michigan. Brenda is a gourmet chef, while Natalie is a schoolteacher and secretary of her church; Michael is a construction foreman, and Mark is a Black Hawk helicopter pilot. The siblings have a grand old time whenever they meet, especially when the matter of who "is loved by dad the most" comes up. Each would, all in good humor, tease the others that he/she is the best-loved one for various perceived reasons but Barbara, the eldest of the lot, would always counter with "Our parents got stuck with you, but they were free to choose when they adopted me. So I'm the chosen one." Their mom, Patricia, is a former registered nurse. Barbara's real mom died of ovarian cancer at age 32.

Growing up in rural Hart, Barbara and a cousin used to go cherry-picking at their neighbor's 65-acre wooded property. Barbara, with determination in her eyes and aged twelve by this time, announced to her skeptical family that one day she would purchase the property. It was her big dream, a dream she nurtured over the years. Forty years later, in 1990, her dream came true. At first the property owner disposed of five acres. The next year, as luck would have it, Barbara got the additional 60 acres. The property, she says, boasts blue heron, wild turkey, and deer roaming around. A stream runs through it. "We have been refurbishing the old house on the property, which was built in 1898," Barbara says. "Whenever we go on trips back east, we have rain gutters put up, or a new septic system installed, or solid oak doors with leaded glass put in. Amish families rebuilt the huge barn, while the kitchen is 38 feet long with red oak floors and granite countertops."

The objective is to turn it into a B&B facility. Hart is 65 miles north of Grand Rapids, and 13 miles to the east of Lake Michigan. Chicago is 250 miles further to the southwest. According to Barbara, Hart has the only blinking stop-light in all of Oceana County, of which Hart is a part."

Right now, her husband, Roy, is in charge of sprucing up this "huge" 5,000-sq. ft. barn, whenever they can find the time. The barn right now houses 14 horses and several pigs, at least. "I plan to retire, on target, at age 62, which is five years from now," Barbara said. "Right now, I'm saving money of course for when Roy and I can work fulltime developing the property to its full potential."

Barbara's odyssey has taken her from Honolulu, Hawaii, where she was born, then to Hart, then two years of college at Michigan State, then a stint at American Airlines, another brief stint with Michigan Bell Telephone, to Hawaii again briefly and in 1973, came to Downey to stay. "I figured it was halfway between Hawaii, where my roots are and where I've gone innumerable times, and Hart, where my family lives and where I have a house." Her son by her first husband, Jason Briley, was born here. After she and Jason's dad divorced in 1989, she married Roy Beard in 1992. Roy has been with Farmers Insurance for 31 years. Jason is a firefighter in Whittier.

To Barbara, life is to be lived to the fullest. She has gone about her business in serene confidence—full bore, and "following her bliss." Abraham Lincoln's honesty and unconquerable spirit have always given her inspiration. She says if she were given the chance to meet one person in all the world, she'd choose Lincoln. She is familiar with the great president's story—how he coped with repeated trials and failures until he ultimately became president of the United States—"one of the greatest, if not the greatest, we've ever had."

Her favorite sayings, "It's not what gets dished out in life, it's how we come through" and "This too shall pass," are meanwhile deeply etched in her mind.

Further, Barbara's attitude towards family, business and life has always been one of humble service and expectant exultation. No wonder all her dreams are coming true.

DUSD hosting school open enrollment

DOWNEY – The Downey Unified School District is conducting its annual School of Choice open enrollment during the month of February for the 2008-09 school year.

Downey parents of students wishing to attend a Downey school outside their attendance area may pick up an application at any Downey school, or at the DUSD office, during the Feb. 1 – 29 enrollment period. New students – including kindergarteners – entering a Downey school for the first time and wishing to apply for School of Choice, should also register at their school of residence. This will guarantee registration in the District for the new school year.

Applications must be submitted to the DUSD office by the closing deadline of Feb. 29 at 4 p.m. Applications are not processed on a first come first served basis. A random, unbiased lottery will be held to place students on a School of Choice waiting list for the 2008-09 school year. Schools may accept students from the established waiting lists according to priority, but only if space is available.

For information, call the office of pupil services at (562) 469-6554.



Mayor Pro Tem Mario Guerra, center, was the first Bronze Sponsor in support of this year's annual Gangs Out Of Downey (GOOD) luncheon, which will be held on April 16 at the Rio Hondo Event Center. This year's keynote speaker will be Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Josephson Institute of Ethics and creator of Character Counts. Guerra is pictured with Darrell Jackson, GOOD president and 10-20 Club founder, and Barbara Lamberth, GOOD treasurer and Downey Federal Credit Union CEO. For more information on the luncheon, call Stan Hanstad at (562) 469-6541.

Gafin to speak at Citizens for Downey

DOWNEY – Mayor David Gafin will be speaking at the next Citizens for Downey meeting this Tuesday, discussing future programs and visions for Downey.

The meeting will be held at the Rio Hondo Event Center and will include a buffet breakfast at 7 a.m., followed by the meeting at 7:15 a.m. No reservations are required.

Downey realtors offers scholarships

DOWNEY – The Downey Association of Realtors will be awarding several \$500 scholarships to students from Columbus, Downey, Downey Adult and Warren High Schools in May.

Applications can be downloaded at www.daor.com, or by visiting either one of the schools' guidance/scholarship counselor. Application deadline is April 1.

For more information, call (562) 861-0915.

Mixer being hosted by DFCU

DOWNEY – Downey Federal Credit Union will host a business mixer Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., sponsored by the Downey Chamber of Commerce.

Admission cost is \$3 and includes refreshments, door prizes and networking opportunities.

Downey Federal Credit Union is located at 8237 3rd St. For more information call (562) 923-2191.

CITY of DOWNEY

Community Participation Meetings for CDBG and HOME Programs.

The City of Downey has scheduled several meetings on the City's federal CDBG and HOME Programs for Fiscal Year 2008-2009. The City is now working on the required Action Plan and Application for these federal grants. These meetings are provided to give those in attendance information on these federal programs, and allow an opportunity to provide input in the annual development process. Interested Downey residents and representatives of community groups are encouraged to attend and comment on the City's housing and non-housing needs, program priorities and propose uses for either of these funding sources. The City estimates it will receive \$1,484,754 in CDBG and \$712,852 in HOME funds for this fiscal year.

Community meetings will be held on:

Monday, February 11th: Golden Park Multi-Purpose Room, 8840 Golden Avenue at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 13th: Barbara J. Riley Community/Senior Center 7810 Quill Dr., Gallatin Room 1:00 p.m.

A Public Hearing will be held on:

Tuesday, February 26th at 7:30 p.m.: Downey City Hall Council Chambers, 11111 Brookshire Avenue

For additional information or to arrange special accommodations to attend any meeting, please contact Ed Velasco at (562) 904-7167.

If you can dream it,

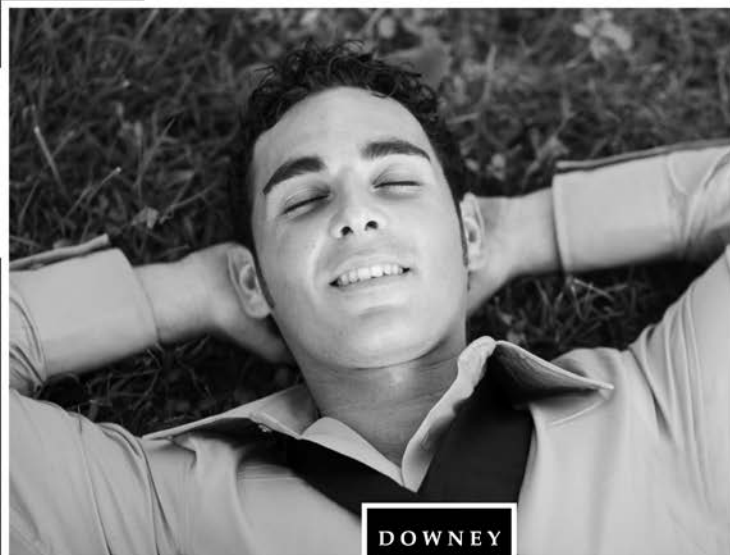
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Dr. Sidney Starkman is as Professor of Medicine in the Division of Emergency Medicine at UCLA and he additionally holds a secondary faculty appointment as a Professor of Neurology at UCLA. He also holds program appointments as Emergency Medicine Director of the UCLA Stroke Center, Director of the UCLA Brain Attack Team and Director of the UCLA Stroke Network

Margo B. Minissian, ACNP, APRN-BC, MSN, CNS Cardiology Nurse Practitioner, Cedars-Sinai Women's Heart is a Cardiology Nurse Practitioner at the Women's Heart Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Her primary research interests focus on women and heart disease, specifically, micro vascular disease and endothelial wall dysfunction in women

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Save the date for an upcoming spring festival

By ROSALIE SCIORTINO, DOWNEY SYMPHONY GUILD
DOWNEY – The Downey Symphony Guild asks that you please mark your calendars for April 20, their prime fundraising event. It's a familiar affair, it's an Italian dinner start to finish, and it's a colorful "Festa Primavera" – Spring Festival.

Be at the Woman's Club of Downey, located at 9813 Paramount Blvd., at 4 p.m. that day, children invited, for an evening of celebrating – Italian style, beginning with a silent auction and entertainment to suit the theme.

The Guild is making this a special gala to celebrate and to support the 50 years of music from our premier symphony orchestra, as well as the Music in the Schools program.

As Joyce Sherwin invited us to dance in the aisles at last Saturday's symphony concert, so we, too, say that if you feel inspired to do a tarantella or two at our gala, be our guest!

Downey Symphony Guild strives to provide funds each year to help insure the continuation of our symphony concerts. Downey is one of the few Southland's communities fortunate enough to maintain such an outstanding orchestra to call our own. But it is only through committed effort of the whole community that this has been possible.

And so the Guild takes on the challenge once more with joy and enthusiasm to invite the community to participate in this gala to help support this important cultural aspect of our city.

More information regarding the Festa will be forthcoming in future issues of the *Patriot*. But for now, mark the date, April 20, when we will meet with old and new friends to help celebrate springtime.

For information, call (562) 869-2120.

Solution to weight loss to be revealed

DOWNEY – The El Dorado Chapter of the American Business Women's Association will have their next meeting on Feb. 20 at the Rio Hondo Event Center.

Guest speaker Sheri O. Zampelli, M.S., author of "From Sabotage to Success," will share her solution for weight loss that works for life.

Social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m.

For information, or to make reservations, call Susan Torrance at (562) 695-7361.

Shabbat services every Friday at Temple

DOWNEY – Temple Ner Tamid invites the community to attend Shabbat services every Friday evening at 7:30 p.m.

The first Friday service of the month is a learning/teaching service; the second Friday is a traditional service; the third Friday is a family and celebrations service; and the fourth Friday is a music service.

Services are conducted by Rabbi Len Muroff and Cantor Ellen Jaffe-Gill, with Norberto Guinaldo at the organ.

Following the services, Kiddush is held (wine and challah are included). Oneg Shabbat follows in the Fellowship Hall, with refreshments provided by the Temple's Sisterhood.

Temple Ner Tamid is located at 10629 Lakewood Blvd. in Downey.

For information, call the Temple office at (562) 861-9276.

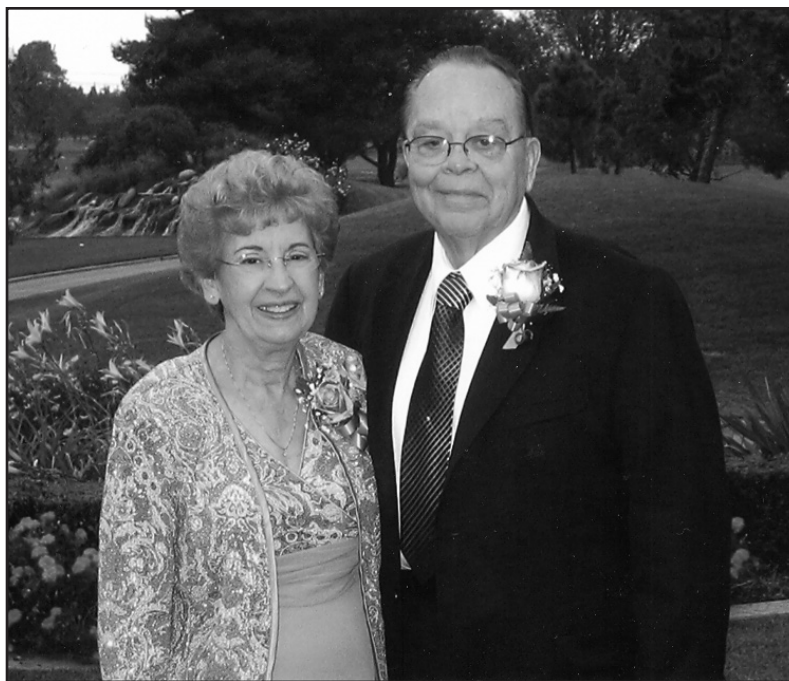
Nominations open for Hall of Fame

DOWNEY – Downey High School is searching for distinguished alumni who wish to be considered for induction into the school's Hall of Fame.

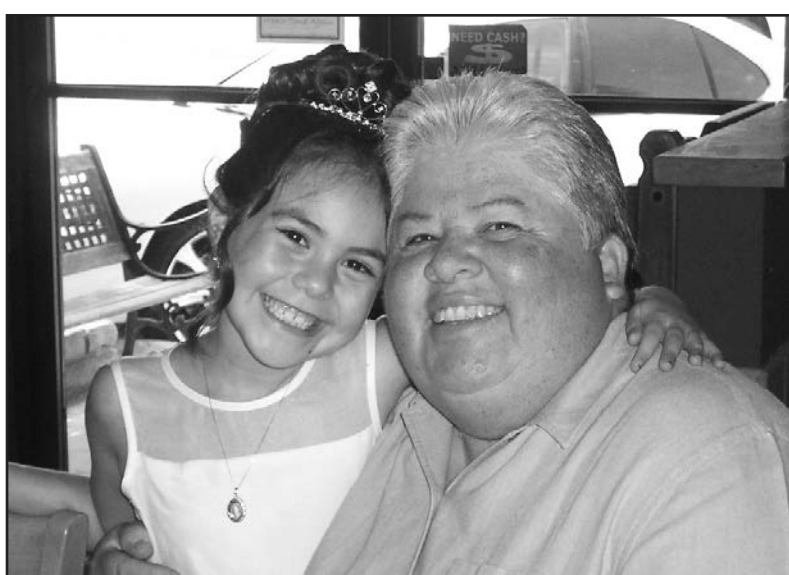
Alumni will be considered in the following categories: Arts, Athletics, Business, Civic/Community/Government, Education and Professional.

Past inductees include Dr. Robert Ballard, the discoverer of the Titanic; entertainers Richard and Karen Carpenter; musician George Pajon, Jr., guitarist for the Black Eyed Peas; and international skating figures JoJo Starbuck and Ken Shelley.

To nominate a person, call Assistant Principal John Baker at (562) 869-7301, ext 5524, for an application.



Dale and Alice Rose of Downey recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at the Rio Hondo Event Center, renewing their vows in front of 140 guests. The couple met at a dance in 1955 and were married on Nov. 16, 1957 in Hilmar, Calif. In 1959, the couple moved to the Los Angeles area and have resided in Downey the past 20 years. They have one daughter, Karen (Kent) Jung, and one grandson, Jonathan, also of Downey.



Eight-year-old Victoria Villasenor of Downey, pictured above with her aunt Arcy Galvan, was recently named Brace Connection's "Get Your Smile On!" contest grand prize winner. She will receive a \$4,000 scholarship from Brace Connection, as well as a Playstation 3 and iPod Nano for showing off her pearly whites.

Brace Connection announces winner

DOWNEY – Brace Connection's "Get Your Smile On!" contest has announced 8-year-old Victoria Villasenor of Downey as its grand prize winner. Contestants were judged on a submitted picture and an essay by the parent(s).

"Victoria was chosen because her smile just made us all laugh, and the essay told her story," said Matt Know, contest organizer. "She captured exactly what we were looking for in this contest. Although other entries were unique and engaging as well, Victoria's picture just made you want to grab her cheeks and squeeze."

Victoria's mother, Melissa, submitted the following essay with Victoria's entry:

"Victoria's smile can brighten anyone's day. If she knows you are having a bad day, she will simply smile at you, and it seems to make everything better. Her smile is contagious – not only will you smile back at her, but you will see and feel her happy, youthful, loving spirit come through. She will gladly share her smile with you if she knows it will make you feel better!"

Victoria will receive a \$4,000 scholarship from Brace Connection, a Playstation 3, and an iPod Nano.

Contest runner-ups were 16-year-old Chantal Banuelos, who will receive a \$200 gift certificate to Stonewood Center, and 6-year-old Aaron Craft, who will receive a \$100 gift certificate to Stonewood Center.

Kids get a chance to make Valentines

DOWNEY – Children ages 3 to 5 and their parents are invited to make Valentines at the Downey City Library's Valentine's Day celebration on Tuesday from 10:30 to 11 a.m. in the Cormack Room.

The program will also be offered in Spanish on Wednesday at the same time.

For information, call (562) 904-7360, ext. 4.

Money tree raffled off at Bingo luncheon

DOWNEY – The Italian Catholic Federation of St. Raymond's Catholic Church will be having a Bingo luncheon on Feb. 17 at 1 p.m.

Donation is \$10 and includes one free Bingo card, door prizes and lunch. A \$25 money tree will also be raffled off.

St. Raymond's is located at 12348 Paramount Blvd. in Downey.

For information, or to purchase tickets, call Aline Amatisto at (562) 693-9430, or Charlene Drobeck at (562) 928-1937.

The Poet's Corner

J.C.

He walked on this earth for such a short time
 Yet he knew so much love from so many
 Always learning, always yearning, a student of life
 As competitive and determined as any

Respected and admired by all who knew him
 He so loved his music and guitar
 He never received recognition
 For talents which might have made him a star

Jason Chappell, we will miss you, to be sure
 But we know that you're walking streets of gold
 If we had our wish, you'd still be here
 We'd enjoy your bright smile 'til you grew old

You willingly made the ultimate sacrifice
 For your country, your family and every friend
 Transitioning with Sturgess and Rosenberg
 On brave soldiers like you we all depend

So have a very happy eternity, "J.C.,"
 In ecstasy, bask in His glory
 In the presence of the Lord forever you'll be
 And it's just the beginning of your story...

– Dave Chappell,
 Downey

Saint Valentine's Day

As youngsters we gave out small tarts
 In the shape of tiny hearts

Sweethearts give boxes of candy
 And that is just dandy

Husbands give their wives flowers
 As they love them with much power

Wives give their husbands much love
 Just like the wings of a dove

So let us always remember this special day
 And keep it in mind with it's cool ray

– Don Davis,
 Downey

What Is Love?

As the two friends hiked up the trail,
 Past the forlorn oak tree and the rickety old rail,
 Soaking up the gentleness, savoring the view,
 When his simple query came like a bolt from the blue.

"What is Love?" he asked timidly with a little frown
 To his companion, her mind as keen as a hound,
 She was baffled by the question, looking around for a sign,
 Some answer, or help, an explanation of some kind.

"Uh, love is a hug," she began, "Love is a kiss."
 "Love is a friend when you're lost in the midst..."
 "Love is a promise," she uttered, "Love is a light."
 "Love is a whisper in the night."

"Do you get it?" she asked, a bit dazed herself
 The boy shook his head, pondering if she'd be of any help.
 "Well...", she continued, puzzled too, "Love is the feeling you get when
 you're with some one close to you."

With a raised eyebrow, she was in a bit of a fuss
 "Someone you love. Someone you trust, I guess, it's kinda like us."
 After a long silence, "Do you understand?"
 Beaming, the boy grasped her sweaty hand.

"Yup, I get it," his eyes gave her the clue,
 "I know what it means because I love you.
 Together they strolled down the winding trail,
 Passing the forlorn oak tree and the rickety old rail,
 Gazing at the lush, green meadow and up to the heavens above,
 Knowing that they'd be together forever for they'd
 always have love.

So it goes to show you that love can be any sign.
 It can be plain and simple, or it can fool any mind.
 It can be cherished, a treasure of romance and rhyme.
 It will last thorough eternity, withstanding the test of time.

– Shaina Marie C. Sta. Cruz,
 Downey

Poets of all ages and abilities are invited to submit their work for consideration in The Poet's Corner. Send your poems to The Downey Patriot, 8301 E. Florence Ave., Suite 100, Downey, CA 90240, or e-mail them to downeypatriot@yahoo.com

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Keeping You Healthy from A to Z

Upcoming Health Education Programs

February-March, 2008

For additional information or to register for any class (unless otherwise noted), please call 562-904-5580.

FOR EXPECTANT PARENTS
 The Stork Tour:
 Expectant Parent Family Birth Center Tour
 Wednesday, March 5
 4 to 6 p.m. – DRMC Conference Room A

Childbirth Education Classes (Series of 4)
 Tuesdays, February 25, March 3, 10 and 17
 7 to 10 p.m. – DRMC Conference Room A or B
 \$75 per couple
 (To register for this particular class, please contact instructor Roselyn Smith 714-319-4267 or prep4baby@sbcglobal.net)

Breastfeeding Workshop
 Tuesday, March 10 – 7 to 9:30 p.m.
 DRMC Conference Room C – \$10 per person

SUPPORT GROUPS
Grief and Loss Program:
 First Saturday of each month, 2 to 4 p.m.
 Contact: Jim at 562-949-3399

Overeaters Anonymous:
 Every Monday, 6:30 to 8 p.m.
 Contact: Alice at 562-927-0887



Sarcoidosis:
 Last Saturday of each month, 1 to 3 p.m.
 Contact: Sarcoidosis Network at 562-809-8500

Restless Legs Syndrome of Southern California:
 3 meetings held each year on Sundays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. – Contact: Janis at 714-633-0123

OTHER CLASSES
Diabetes Management (Series of 4 Classes)
 Thursdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27
 6 to 8:30 p.m.
 DRMC Conference Room A or B
 \$10 materials fee

Healthy Heart Nutrition Class
 Wednesday, February 13 or
 Wednesday, March 12
 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
 DRMC Conference Room A or B

Downey Regional Medical Center
 Your Community Hospital
 11500 Brookshire Avenue
 Downey, CA 90241

Downey Historical Society 2008 OUTREACH PROGRAM!

Saving Downey History one family at a time!


Downey Historical Society would like your old home movies & photographs. We are collecting all 8mm, super 8mm & 16mm films, negative & positive still photographs, yearbooks and other memorabilia for our archive. **Don't toss it! SAVE IT!**

You may bring these items to be placed on display Wednesday or Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Call ahead 562-862-2777

The peoples history will be lost forever due to negligent thinking about saving history! Films gathered will be featured in future DHS programs. Look in your garage or attic. Films and photos relating to Downey including old 16mm educational films are wanted! Before you toss it, bring it to us!

HISTORY WILL NOT WAIT! SAVE IT NOW!



Casting an Eye

By Eric Pierce

And now back to our regularly scheduled program. The distraction and hubbub more distinctly known as Measure G is a memory now, having been soundly defeated at the polls by a smart and educated Downey citizenry, armed gamely with the facts they needed to make a personal but crucial decision that would affect the entire community at large. The issue, to be sure, is now at rest.

At least until Tuesday.

There are lessons to be learned by Measure G, of which we should heed:

- 1.) No matter which way you spin it, \$85,000 is a lot of money.
- 2.) Downey citizens like term limits just the way they are.
- 3.) History has a way of repeating itself.

My biggest worry now is for this coming November, when two City Council seats will be wide open for the taking. Will the bitterness and derisiveness of the Measure G campaign discourage qualified candidates from running for office?

We all better hope not.

Letters to the Editor:

Crossing guard a 'guardian angel'

Dear Editor:

My father, Alvin Caton, has been employed with All City Management for almost 18 years. He was just recently terminated a few weeks ago.

The "big shot" at All City Management has decided he wants the crossing guard to turn his back on the children when crossing them. They want the crossing guard to watch the traffic and not the kids. My father has been doing his job for almost 18 years and in the 18 years how many children have been hit or killed by a motorist? None!

My father is well-liked by the children and their parents. He has crossed many children from start of kindergarten all the way to high school. He has also crossed five of his "own grandchildren" in those 18 years.

Sometime in 2006, *The Downey Patriot* published an article from a Downey resident. This article was to the editor and it was called, "Proud of Neighbor's Work." It was a very sweet and touching article. My father was so proud of his picture in the paper, he made sure that I myself got a copy. Just two years ago, he received a medal pin (which he wears proudly everyday) from All City Management, acknowledging his dedication and many years of service. He also received a certificate of some sort. He was very proud of it, he showed everyone his award. Some people were lucky if they got to see it twice.

Alvin Caton is a "guardian angel" to those children.

—Connie R. Foster,
Buckeye, Ariz.

Time to get back to business

Dear Editor:

Now that the citizens of Downey have overwhelmingly rejected the power grab known as "Measure G," hopefully the City Council members will get back to taking care of business for us, the citizens, and stop looking out for their personal interests.

Do you think it's possible they could finally do something with Johnie's Broiler? Maybe they could think of a way to relieve traffic congestion at Firestone and Lakewood Boulevards. Holy Moly! Maybe they could look into the blight that has become Firestone Boulevard between Paramount Boulevard and Downey Avenue. How about fixing the potholes that have sprung up lately in our streets (\$85,000 would have helped there).

I could go on and on with the myriad of other issues that need their attention.

Lady and gentlemen, you have a duty to the citizens of Downey – let's get back to work.

—Jim Richards,
Downey

'G' stands for 'good riddance'

Dear Editor:

The proponents of Measure G on the City Council (Kirk Cartozian, Mario Guerra and Rick Trejo) claimed during their campaign for much longer political careers, that the "G" stood for good.

With the citizens of Downey turning out for the Feb. 5 election to resoundingly defeat Measure G by a landslide, the "G" now stands for "good riddance" to these politicians who, in an incredible act of hubris, would force their will on the people of Downey.

Cartozian and Trejo have the rest of the year to salvage their records of service to the community. Guerra has almost three years to salvage his, unless of course the people speak up again and recall him, as his motives in serving are questionable.

To Cartozian and Trejo, thank you for your service. To Guerra, get back to work for the community, as you have squandered what precious time you may have left.

Term limits as they are in the city of Downey work just fine for the people.

—Brian Heyman,
Downey



There is much to be tackled

Dear Editor:

Now that the distraction over the effort to step back from term limits on which the voters of Downey decided upon a few years back, maybe the City Council can concentrate its attention and generate equal energy to address some of the issues the voters really want the City Council to concentrate on and make an honest effort to address.

The parking situation in the city, especially aggravated by the proliferation of "mansions" which inordinately increase automobile density because of the increase in bedroom numbers per R1 lots, is one. More bedrooms equals more cars per 50-foot curb space. Other cities have dealt with the parking issue. No, there are no easy answers to this one, but doing nothing is not an acceptable one.

We have had enough time to look at the disaster site into which the site of Johnie's Broiler has deteriorated. The people who broke the law by demolishing the structure without a permit have been punished some time ago. Now it is time to let the property owner to develop the site subject to design review as any other commercial development. If the City Council wants Johnie's Broiler rebuilt, let them propose a bond, buy the property, rebuild, and lease it to an operator to run it. Do they have the confidence that the public would make the place pay? The Rio Hondo Event Center is a money maker. The McDonald's on Florence Avenue is working. Can we make it happen with a Johnie's Broiler? The former owners could not do so with the property paid off a long time ago!

It is time to honestly address the need for a historic/architectural preservation ordinance. What has been the hold up?

We claim we are a "tree city." A tree ordinance has yet to be addressed. Are we waiting for some developer to cut down some of the mature trees which give the city the "tree" characterization and for the citizens to get up in arms to move the City Council to act?

We have a lot of talk about "art and culture" as important elements in the quality of life index of a community. Other than a very restrictive "one percent" Public Arts ordinance, we are far behind and falling further behind in this area. We have done very little for the performing arts or city sponsored visual arts in the community. We have had a very fine Civic Theatre, but it is mostly dark. We have a museum of art in the city, but it lacks visibility. Yes, the city provides some financial support to the Downey Symphony, the museum and the Rose Float Association, for which their sponsors plead during budget review time. We can do more! A city of more than 110,000 population and fairly well-off has no local theater other than the DCLC, which makes it on its own!

We are building the Columbia Memorial Space Science Learning Center and a new park associated with it, but we refused to take under serious consideration the operating costs of these facilities by ensuring low operating energy costs. We can still do something about it. Energy cost is one of the few elements of operating costs we can do something about. We can hope that the city will not overlook energy costs in the next city owned facility it builds – the consolidated city yard.

We have been promised that the city will come up with a resolution or an ordinance to encourage conservation and energy efficiency in new buildings going up in the city and in the process help in the effort to reduce energy dependence and reduce the rate of global warming. And this can be done at no cost to the city! Many, even smaller cities are doing so. What is holding us up?

And then, there is the "revitalization" of Downey Avenue. The renovation was done some time ago. We are still waiting for "revitalization!" What happened to the proposal to turn the old Avenue movie house into an "arts" movie house that could serve Downey and attract people from nearby communities? The nearest such theater is in Pasadena. What happened

to the plan to being other venues to the street which would attract people to the Avenue?

And then again, there is the downtown project. Who is taking the initiative to move it ahead?

The development of the area near Los Amigos into a modern-era, clean manufacturing industrial zone for solar energy industry is waiting. A joint effort with the County and neighboring South Gate can bring some needed high value manufacturing jobs to the area. Who is up to taking on this initiative? It may take some time to bring it about, but properly launched, it can be continued by subsequently elected councilpersons.

A review of our city General Plan will yield a great many more programs of great value and worthy of the City Council's attention. The same General Plan this City Council adopted. Who is up to it?

In the past, we have empowered authorities, boards, committees, and new and existing commissions to study issues, hold hearings where appropriate and come to City Council with recommendations for action. Perhaps the time has come to open up our city government and to ask the citizens of our city to help in bringing about programs and actions to make it a better city in which to live and be proud.

—Harold Tseklenis,
Downey

Citizens should be heard

Dear Editor:

In response to Jeannine Niemira's letter (*The Downey Patriot*, 2/1/08), this is the second time I've heard someone defend Councilman Guerra with the phrase, "I support him, right or wrong." This strikes me as strange. When I support someone I want to be sure in my own mind that he is RIGHT.

Also, Guerra isn't the only one in Downey who attends church or is a believer. Christians can and are allowed to disagree with the actions of the City Council. It isn't a religious organization – it's a civil matter. I would complain just as loudly if I felt my pastor had wasted \$85,000.

Now, regarding my speaking on the subject of putting City Council meetings online being off subject, my understanding is that the public is allowed five minutes each on any subject one might chose. Yes, online is a past subject. One might consider ending term limits as a past subject, since term limits has been law for several years. What I was asking, and still am, is that the Council revisit this issue, as I'm unhappy that they decided to append \$63,000-plus for initial expense and then \$7,500 each meeting to go online. This is taxpayer money and will cost approximately \$195,000 every year. I've been told that public comments will not be included in the online presentation. Then another told me they didn't yet know what will be included. It appears to me that this was voted in without much thought.

I don't like seeing our city divided as it now is. I feel most of it was unnecessary. There was no demand to end term limits at the grassroots level.

If the State allows a five minute time period for citizens to be heard, perhaps it would be wise to listen to the people who put them in office.

—Elsa Van Leuven,
Downey

CORRECTIONS

- An obituary last week for Daniel Kingston Cable incorrectly stated his age. He was 89.
- A sports story in last week's issue incorrectly stated the number of wins necessary for Downey and Warren High Schools to qualify for the playoffs. A total of 12 wins are needed.

The Downey Patriot



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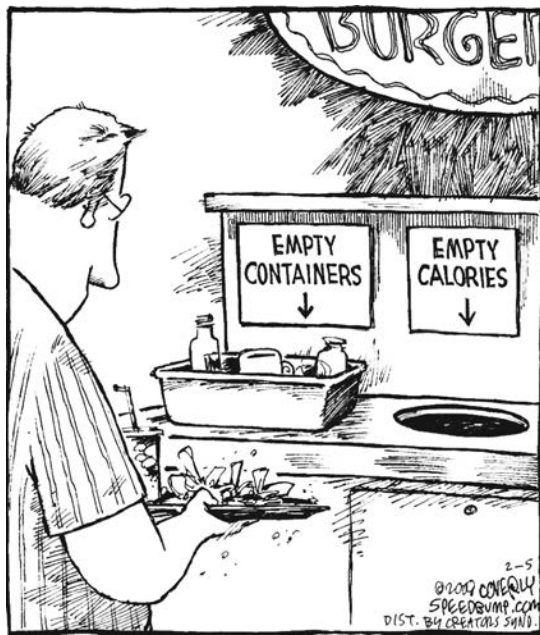
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SPEED BUMP



DAVE COVERLY



Downey Community Calendar

Events For February

- Sat. Feb. 9: "Spa Day," Cher Clinic, Noon
- Tues. Feb. 12: Mayor Dave Gafin speaks at Citizens for Downey, Rio Hondo Event Center, 7 a.m.
- Wed. Feb. 13: Chamber of Commerce Mixer, Downey Federal Credit Union, 5:30 p.m.
- Thurs. Feb. 14: Book Lover's Club, Downey City Library, Noon

City Meetings

- 1st Tuesdays, 6:15 p.m.: Redevelopment Project Area Committee, Cormack Meeting Room at Downey Library.
- 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 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.
- 2nd & 4th Wednesday, 6 p.m.: Design Review Board, Council Chamber at City Hall.
- 3rd Thursday, 3:30 p.m.: Parking Place Commission, Second Floor Training Room at City Hall

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

Mondays

- 6:30 p.m.: Metropolitan Masonic Lodge #352 dinner, mtg., for information call 426-6786.
- 6:30 p.m.: Overeaters Anonymous, at Downey Regional Med. Center Conf. Room A, for info. call 426-6786.
- 1st Mon., 4 p.m.: 2nd Century Foundation, at City Hall, 1st floor, call 927-9790.
- 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.
- 3rd Mon., 7 p.m.: American Legion Post 270, Los Amigos Country Club, call 869-1053.
- 4th Mon., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Numismatists, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.

Tuesdays

- 9 a.m.: Downey Bocce Club, at Apollo Park, for information call Vince Zoida at (714) 761-4439.
- 9:30 a.m.: Downey Seniors Club, at Apollo Park, for information call Nadine Morris at 923-9422.
- 9:30 a.m.: Adventure with the Bible, at the First Baptist Church call 928-4153.
- 12 p.m.: Rotary Club, at Rio Hondo, for information call Darren Dunaway at 806-5400.
- 12 p.m.: Exchange Club of Downey, at Sizzler, for information call Don Hollister at 927-5871.
- 6:00 p.m.: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, for info call 928-2658.
- 7 p.m.: Boy Scout Troop 2, at Downey United Methodist Church, for information call 869-6478.
- 7 p.m.: Boy Scout Troop 441, at Apollo Park Activities Room, for information call 923-3659.
- 7:30 p.m.: Southland Harmony Chorus of Sweet Adelines, at Downey's Woman's Club, for information call 947-6802.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 7:30 a.m.: Chamber "Rise&Shine" Networkers, at Nordic Fox. for info. call (562) 923-2191.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 6 p.m.: Sertoma Club, at Bakers Square. for information call (562) 927-6438.
- 2nd Tues., 7 p.m.: Downey Fly Fishers, at Apollo Park, for information call 943-3904.
- 3rd Tues., 7:30 p.m.: Writer's Workshop West, at at Downey High School library, for info call 862-3106.
- Last Tues., 11:00 a.m.: Los Companeros Service Club, at Los Amigos Country Club, for info call 863-1549.

Wednesdays

- 7 a.m.: Kiwanis Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center. Call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.
- 1 p.m.: Women's Bocce Club, for information call 869-8782.
- 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.
- 1st Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Emblem Club #309, at Downey's Elks Lodge, for information call 868-4386.
- 2nd Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Model A Club, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, for information call 928-4132.
- 2nd Weds., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Sister Cities Ass'n, at Maude Price School, Call 862-7197.
- 2nd Weds., 11:45 a.m. - Downey Christian Women's Club, at Los Amigos CC, Call 927-8488.
- 2nd & 4th Weds., 11:00 a.m. - AARP, at Barbara J. Riley CC, Call Lorene Frazier 861-6075.
- 3rd Weds., - Downey Dog Obedience Club Apollo Park.
- 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 Furman Park West Bldg., call 943-5513.
- Wed. & Fri., 10:15 a.m.: Senior Bingo, at Apollo Park, for information call 904-7223.

Thursdays

- 7:30 a.m.: Soroptimist Int'l of Downey, for information, call Pat Heineke, 904-3534.
- 7:30 a.m.: Connections Networking, at Nordic Fox 10924 Paramount, for information call 869-1414.
- 12 p.m.: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 923-0971.
- 12 p.m.: Downey Christian Businessmen's Committee, for information call 928-4153.
- 12 p.m.: Optimist Club of Downey, at Sambi's, for information call Steve Allen at 622-7655.
- 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.
- 4th Thurs., 7:30 p.m.: Downey Historical Society programs, at Community Center. Call 862-2777.
- 2nd Thurs., 7:30 p.m.: Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club, for more information call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.

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.

On This Day...

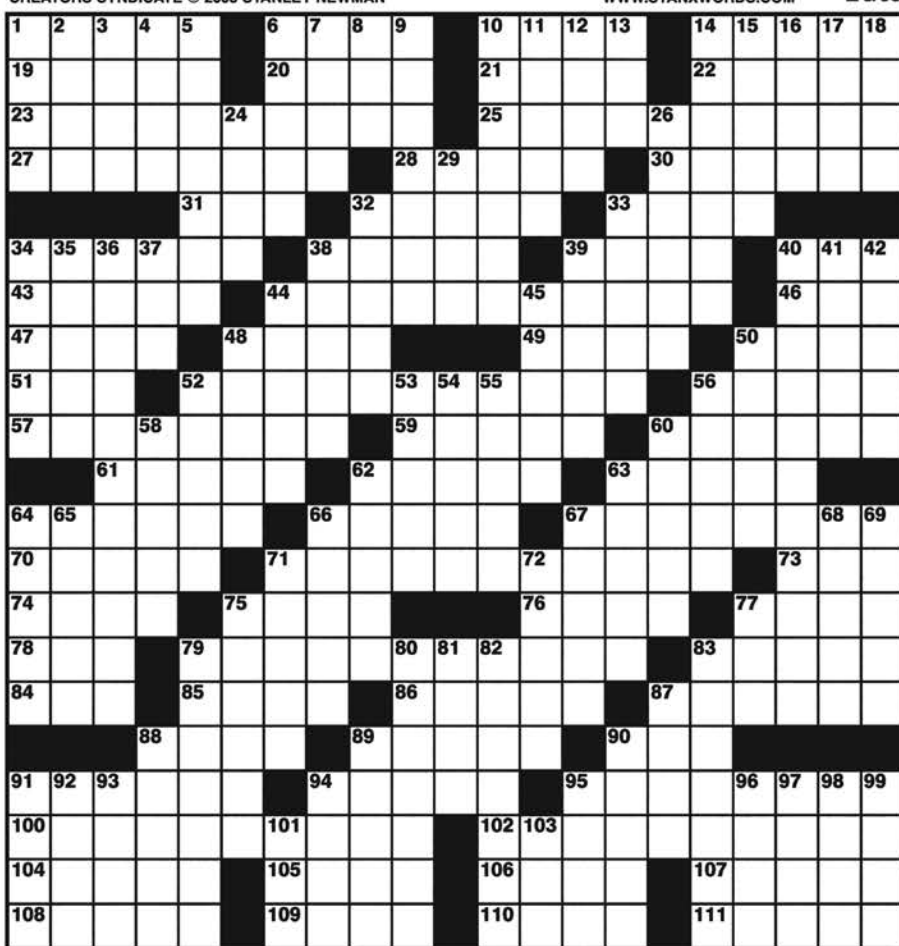
- Feb. 8, 1587: Mary, Queen of Scots, is beheaded after her implication in a plot to murder her cousin Queen Elizabeth I. The execution takes place at Fotheringhay Castle in England.
- 1922: President Warren G Harding installs a radio in the White House.
- 1924: The United States executes its first person using lethal gas at Nevada State Prison.
- 1968: A civil rights protest against a whites-only bowling alley in Orangeburg, S.C. results in the deaths of three college students.
- 1996: The Communications Decency Act, condemned by some as government restrictions of free speech on the Internet, is signed into law by President Bill Clinton.
- 2004: Beyonce ties the record for female performers by winning five Grammy Awards.

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
TRUNK LINES: Ten for you to find
by S.N.

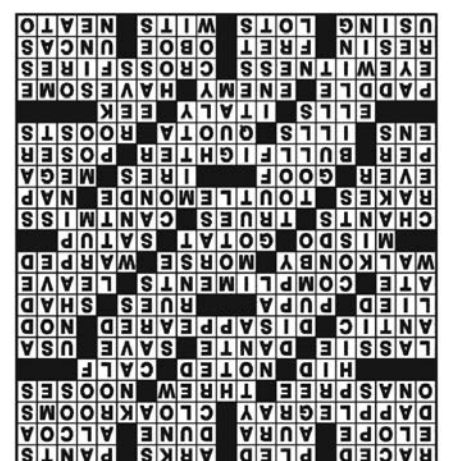
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You can contact puzzle editor Stanley Newman at his e-mail address: StanXwords@aol.com. Or write him at P.O. Box 69, Massapequa Park, NY 11762, Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you'd like a reply.

AD CREEP (10 Down) is the expansion of advertising to nontraditional venues such as elevators and store checkout lines. A Bessemer converter (36 Down) is a device that produces steel from molten iron. While ESSO (99 Down) gas stations in the U.S. were renamed Exxon in 1973, Esso remains a gasoline brand elsewhere in the world, including Canada.



Paging Dr. Alan Frischer...

BY DR. ALAN FRISCHER



One out of every two women over the age of 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in her lifetime. For men, it will be one in four. Just what is osteoporosis, and why does it creep up on us as we age?

Osteoporosis is a disease characterized by low bone density and structural deterioration. Bones become fragile and more likely to break. Osteoporosis is a major public health issue for 44 million Americans. It changes lives forever and is deadly. One in four hip fracture patients, aged 50 or older, die during the year following their fracture. One in five hip fracture patients eventually end up in a nursing home.

Osteoporosis is often called a silent disease because bone loss occurs without symptoms. We may not know that we have osteoporosis until our bones become so weak that a sudden strain, bump or fall causes a fracture, or a collapsed vertebra. (Collapsed vertebra may initially be felt or seen in the form of severe back pain, loss of height, spinal deformities, or stooped posture.) Of the one and a half million fractures that occur every year, 300,000 affect the hip, 700,000 are vertebral (back), 250,000 wrist, and 300,000 affect other sites.

So, who's at risk? As you look this over, you will find some factors that you can't do much about, but others which are certainly under your control:

- Women
- Caucasians and Asians (studies show, for example, that Caucasian women age 65 or older have twice the incidence of fractures as Black women)
- Thin people (or those with a small frame, or low bone mass)

- Those with a family history of osteoporosis or fractures among family members after they reach the age of 50

- Older people
- Women with an estrogen deficiency as a result of menopause
- Women with an abnormal absence of menstrual periods
- Sufferers of anorexia nervosa
- Those with a lifetime calcium deficiency

- Those with a vitamin D deficiency

- Users of certain medications such as corticosteroids or anticonvulsant drugs

- Men with low testosterone levels

- Those who follow an inactive lifestyle

- Those with poor nutrition
- Excessive soda drinkers

- Excessive alcohol drinkers (phosphoric acid binds to calcium, preventing calcium from being available to build bone mass)

- Current cigarette smokers
- Excessive alcohol drinkers

Osteoporosis is detected through a bone mineral density (BMD) scan. This scan can detect osteoporosis before a fracture occurs, predict chances of future fractures, and determine the rate of bone loss. Medicare currently reimburses for a BMD test every two years.

So what is the best strategy for preventing osteoporosis?

- By about age 20, a woman has acquired 98% of her skeletal mass. Building strong bones during

childhood and adolescence is the best defense against developing osteoporosis later. It is critical that girls under 20 consume adequate calcium in their diet in order to build up bone density to last for the rest of their lives.

- Consume foods rich in calcium, including dairy products, broccoli, figs, almonds, calcium-fortified orange juice, cereals, and breads.

- Women over age 30 should consider taking calcium supplements (plus vitamin D) of about 500 mg daily. Women over age 40 should increase their calcium supplement to 1,000 mg daily. Menopausal women with osteoporosis need a calcium supplement of about 1,500 mg per day.

- Remember that calcium is easier to absorb when consumed in smaller doses throughout the day.

- Find the calcium supplement that is right for you. No one brand or type of supplement has been shown to be better than another.

- Stay active with weight bearing and resistance-training exercises.

- Refrain from smoking or excessive alcohol consumption.

- In addition to calcium and vitamin D supplements, there are several medications used to treat osteoporosis. Consult with your doctor to see whether you should have a bone mineral density (BMD) scan and whether medication might be right for you.

As always, good health to you all!

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

New drugs and treatments aim to help sufferers of chronic headaches

CONTRIBUTED BY THE NATIONAL HEADACHE FOUNDATION

More than 15 years ago, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first triptan, a drug specifically designed for the acute treatment of migraine, ushering in a new era of drug research and development for migraine and chronic headache sufferers. Not only did headache sufferers find that a new line of targeted medications was available to treat their headaches, but the pharmaceutical industry finally took note of a large population in need of more effective medications.

"For many years, there was limited research on headaches," said Seymour Diamond, M.D., co-founder of the National Headache Foundation. "But the approval of the triptan drugs for the acute treatment of migraine opened up the industry to the realization that there was a financial market out there for drugs for the long-standing headache sufferer. It is now interested in looking for newer and better methods."

Studies such as the American Migraine Prevalence and Prevention Study (AMPP), sponsored by the National Headache Foundation, have been revealing large numbers of migraine and chronic headache sufferers who are not getting adequate treatment or the relief they need.

The good news is that more than 20 pharmaceutical and biotech companies are currently researching or developing new drugs to address headache and migraine. The road to drug approval is difficult and full of risks; on average an experimental drug requires 10 to 15 years to travel from the lab to the pharmacy and only one in five drugs tested on humans is ultimately approved.

Here's a look at some anticipated headache products, including generic versions of existing drugs, medications undergoing clinical trials, and drugs that are being re-packaged into different modes of delivery:

- Generics – Oral and intranasal generic sumatriptan are expected to be available in 2008 and 2009, respectively (Ranbaxy Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and NovaDel).

- Inhalation device – Uses heat to vaporize a drug into an odorless mist that passes through the lungs into the bloodstream. The hope is to provide relief within 60 seconds.

- Skin patch – The system uses a transdermal patch containing the drug and a small battery-powered electronic controller that precisely controls the rate and amount of drug released from the patch. A patch is currently in clinical trials using zolmitriptan (Actyve from Vyteris). A sumatriptan transdermal patch based on proprietary SmartRelief iontophoretic patch technology is in development (NuPathe).

- Nasal powders – A powder form of dihydroergotamine is being studied. Currently administered as a nasal spray, the powder form may be easier to use and more rapidly absorbed (DHE Nasal Powder from Britannia Pharmaceuticals in collaboration with Novartis Pharmaceuticals).

- Inhalation – An orally inhaled formulation of dihydroergotamine is in development. Absorbed in the lungs, this formulation may provide ease-of-use benefits as well as rapid onset (MAP Pharmaceuticals).

- New drug combination – A combination of sumatriptan and naproxen sodium that provides faster, sustained pain relief compared to each individual medication is expected in 2008 (Trexima from Zozen, Inc., in conjunction with GlaxoSmithKline).

- Medications with new uses – Drugs that were previously used to treat other conditions such as epilepsy, depression and Alzheimer's are now being studied for their potential impact on headaches and migraines. Medications involved in current clinical trials include Tripleptal, an anticonvulsant (Novartis); Aricept, an Alzheimer's drug (Eisai); and Neurontin, an anticonvulsant (Pfizer).

"While these new treatment options have interesting potential, the reality is that some will prove to be effective while others won't, and headache sufferers should continue to work closely with their healthcare providers to decide upon the most effective course of treatment," said Diamond.

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Downey

Tue, Feb 12th & 26th
10:00 am
Carrow's
10640 Rosecrans Ave
Norwalk

Fri, Feb 15th
11:30 am
Szechwan
11010 Paramount Blvd
Downey

Wed, Feb 20th
11:30 am
Sizzler
10315 Lakewood Blvd
Downey

Thurs, Feb 21st
3:00 pm
Sizzler
11835 Imperial Hwy
Norwalk

CareMore Health Plan is a Managed Care and Special Needs Plan HMO with Medicare Advantage contracts. A sales representative will be present with information and Individual Election Forms. Accommodations of persons with special needs can be arranged. ¹All benefits are based on the 2008 Calendar Year. ²\$50 co-pay on hospital emergency room visit (waived if admitted). \$75 co-pay per day for the first 4 days of a benefit period for a stay in a non-preferred hospital. ³Unlimited non-emergency transportation to and from plan approved locations within our service area. ⁴Covered for up to 12 weeks of plan approved Exercise & Strength Training per calendar year. \$20 monthly fee will apply after the first 12 covered weeks. ⁵Pharmacy Benefits are subject to a covered list which is subject to change. ⁶CareMore Connect members will not qualify. ⁷CareMore Touch Members will not qualify. ⁸Covered for one consultation per calendar year. CMS Approval # H0544_010814A CHP (01/08)

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Word of MOUTH
by Soheir S. Azer, D.D.S.
If you expect your toothbrush to take care of you, you must take proper care of it. To begin with, ask the dentist to help you select the most suitable toothbrush for you. At home, allow your toothbrush to air-dry in the open while standing on its end. Do not store toothbrushes in closed containers for prolonged periods, as the moist environment may encourage bacterial growth that can compromise your health. The American Dental Association recommends that you replace your toothbrush (both manual brushes and electric brush heads) every 3-4 months, more frequently if the bristles are frayed. The ADA also warns against sharing toothbrushes to prevent the potential spread of communicable diseases. A clean toothbrush ensures clean teeth.
Tooth brushing plays an important everyday role for personal oral hygiene and effective plaque removal. Appropriate toothbrush care and maintenance are also important considerations for sound oral hygiene. We believe in preventive dentistry. Oral health is a long-term commitment we share with each patient. Your teeth – with proper care – should last a lifetime. We're located at 10800 Paramount Blvd., Suite 307, where we are sensitive to the needs of all age groups, giving everyone the patience and empathy they require. For superior quality dental care, call (562) 923-3714 to schedule an appointment.
P.S. Parents should monitor the condition of their children's toothbrushes, which tend to wear out more rapidly.
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A refreshing, blowout win for the Vikings

■ Vikings dismantle Warren, 61-34, to earn themselves a berth in CIF playoffs.

BY SCOTT COBOS, CONTRIBUTOR

DOWNEY – With both teams one step away from a playoff berth, it was Downey High School's basketball team who came away victorious in what was a blowout from the start in a 61-34 win Wednesday.

Downey (12-14, 2-7) started hot and stayed that way beginning the game with a 14-0 run. Warren (11-15, 1-8) didn't score until 1:43 left in the first quarter.

At the end of one period of play, Downey led 16-2 and never looked back. The Vikings never let their city rivals come any closer than 13 points and were up by as many as 31 points at one time.

With the win, the Vikings virtually ensure themselves of a wildcard berth in the CIF Southern Section post season.

After a slow start of the season, Downey managed to pick up some steam upsetting Lynwood High School last Friday 59-50, then bringing home that momentum to leave no doubt in anyone's mind who the better city team is.

"It started with the Paramount game," said Downey head coach Larry Shelton. "We played a great game when we went over there. We're 3-1 in the second half right now, and I give all the credit in the world to my kids. I have a great group of kids to coach this year and I'm proud of them."

Downey stayed tenacious all night long defensively bumping around the smaller Warren Bears. It was evident from the start that Warren would struggle all night long offensively.

"We did a much better job defensively in this game than we did in the first time around when we played them," Shelton said.



Downey head coach Larry Shelton gets doused with Gatorade after his team defeats Warren, 61-34, to earn a playoff spot. Photo by Art Montoya

"I'm just really thrilled with the effort my kids put out."

Warren's three top season scorers Chris Maheras, Mohammed Chehata and Brandon Chavers were the only whippers from Warren's offense scoring 21 of their team's 34 total points.

But even when they were scoring, every shot was contested causing very little room for error as Downey made Warren pay for every forced turnover.

The Vikings were led by backup guard Alex Mediola who scored a game high 16 points. Most of his points were scored on fast break opportunities caused by Warren's turnovers.

He was backed up by forward Matt Black who chipped in with 15 points and seven rebounds of his

own.

Downey was in such complete control of the game it caused Warren to lose their composure at times. Bears head coach Brent Willis was called for a technical foul with 5:42 left in the third quarter for arguing with one of the referees about a hold that was never whistled.

While the Bears were fussing and arguing, the Vikings could be seen starting to rejoice in the revival of what looked to be a dead end of a season.

"If you only knew the whole story of this season," Shelton said. "Four of my best players left the program in the Spring because their parents had issues with me."

"We had a very young inexperienced team and going in I knew we

would take our lumps and I was really worried how many games we would really win at all and for us to get to 12 and make the playoffs I'm so thrilled. In my wildest dreams I didn't think this group would be able to do that. This group of kids just kept getting better and better. It's just a testament to these kids."

While Downey's fate seems to be heading down a golden brick road, Warren all of a sudden finds itself in the shadows of a season that was plagued with missed opportunities possibly missing the playoffs pending the result of the season ending game versus Dominguez yesterday.

Willis was not able to be reached after the game for comment.

The better team turned out to be Downey

BY SCOTT COBOS, CONTRIBUTOR

Stepping back and looking at the beginning of the basketball season, it's absolutely amazing to see that Downey would be the team reaching the playoffs rather than Warren.

Statistically speaking, Warren basketball had all the crucial edges. They scored more points per game, they rebounded the ball just as well as Downey did, they had better shooters and they held their opponents to lower scores.

They even had the hot new coach on the block in Brent Willis who came from an extremely difficult division who had the defending state champions Artesia in it.

Going into league play, Warren also had a better record than Downey with double digit wins while Downey was struggling to find win No. 9.

But guess who could be waltzing into the gymnasium to play a post season game soon? It's not Warren. It's the Downey Vikings.

It's goes to show you that grit, guts and heart could be enough to get a team into the playoffs.

Downey struggled all year long with the teams they played. Downey head coach Larry Shelton didn't exactly have the easiest job in the world

making quick references to how "overmatched" his and Willis' teams were.

Playing in a division like the San Gabriel Valley League turned out to tell the story of two teams who had to overcome adversity.

Warren's story was tough and only became a little tougher as the season went on. The Bear's lost a few players due to the dramatic changes that come along with a new head coach.

The Bears also lost a couple players to eligibility issues according to one Warren official. But you could tell after watching Warren play a few games that they would survive and make a run at the playoffs.

The Downey Vikings on the other hand are a different story. Off the court issues, differences in philosophies and personalities played a big part in the release of four of what Shelton called his "best players."

Downey always seemed a step too slow to the ball or an inch too short on their jump shots. Games always came to the end of the final quarter only to finish in disappointment.

How many times can a team lose by nine or fewer points and maintain their sanity and composure? Downey proved they could do it with their eyes closed being led by their fearless leader Shelton.

The down and dirty style of play paid off as that intensity started to translate into wins. Not only were they wins, they acted almost as checkpoints to Downey's road to a revived season.

Downey proved they could run and gun with Lynwood. They proved they could scrap against teams like Paramount. They proved they could clutch up when needed as they showed in this past Warren game.

"We're not going to score a lot of points when we play," Shelton said earlier in the season.

He was right. Downey doesn't score a lot of points. They average a shade under 60 points a game and have scored as little as 35 points in one of their games.

See COBOS, page 11

Despite Maheras' gem, Warren unable to clinch

■ Chris Maheras scores 22 points and grabs nine boards, but it's not enough as Warren loses, 76-35.

BY SCOTT COBOS, CONTRIBUTOR

DOWNEY – Only one step away from a playoff berth, the Warren Bears (11-14, 1-8) were unable to clinch against Gahr (18-9, 5-3) last Friday night losing 76-35.

Once again, turnovers were the demise of the Bears as they gave the ball away 27 times compared to 25 times the last time they played the Gladiators.

Not only were they unable to take care of the ball, their offense struggled all night long with only one player scoring more than half of Warren's points.

Warren's Chris Maheras scored 22 points to go along with his nine rebounds in the game. Maheras was the only Bear to score in the first quarter scoring all 12 points. He was also the lead scorer for Warren in the third quarter with three points.

"Chris is just an absolute player," said Warren head coach Brent Willis. "I'm so proud of him. If there's a bright spot in this season it's Chris Maheras' performance as a senior. When we need him to step up he steps up. Everytime we play a big game, Chris steps up."

That would be the only bright spot of the game for Warren as only two other players scratched on the score sheet.

On the other side of the ball, Gahr's David Goldston lead a relentless attack on Warren, leading the Gladiators with 15 points and five rebounds.

Every player that stepped foot on the floor for Gahr scored at least four points. The Gladiators made it look easy diving in and out of the Bears' man-to-man defense laying the ball up with no resistance.

Warren continues to struggle in league play, only winning once against the Downey Vikings at home.

"We know we didn't play our best," Willis said. "We know we played a good team. You're always very disappointed when you play like this at home."

"But I have to tell you after everything that has happened this season we've had so much adversity to battle that people don't know about and people will never know about and to be one step off from playoffs, it's a testimony to what these guys have inside of them."



The Warren High School girls varsity water polo team recently beat Downey High School, 8-7, a first in seven years.

Warren girls water polo make history with win

DOWNEY – For the first time in seven years, the Warren High School girls varsity water polo team (13-5) beat Downey High School 8-7 in a recent meet.

Leading scorers for Warren include Melissa Cedarholm with three goals, Brittany Vasquez with one goal, April Hernandez with one goal, Amber Smith with three goals, and Kristyn Casas with 13 blocks and five steals in the cage.

Leading scorers for Downey include Ariana Weisenberger with three goals and Karen Aguirre with four goals.

Warren's girls junior varsity water polo team also beat Downey, 9-8, making the sweep over the cross-town rival the first in Warren history for girls water polo.

Tennis classes at Independence Park

DOWNEY – The city of Downey Community Services Department will be offering a new slate of tennis classes for youth and adults beginning March 4 at Independence Park.

Adult classes will be held Tuesday or Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Each class is one hour long and will focus on continued skill development from beginning to advanced players. Cost for the eight-week class is \$95.

In addition, an adult tennis league will be held on Thursday evenings from 7 to 8:30 p.m., offering a blend of socialization and competitive league play. Cost for the league is also \$95 for eight weeks.

Youth classes will also be offered for ages 4-7 and 8-14 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays for the cost of \$95 for eight weeks.

For more information or to register, call (562) 904-7238.

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Some like it hot: Interactive novels spicing up love lives

BY BROOKE KARLI, STAFF WRITER

While most women will receive roses, chocolates or lingerie this Valentine's Day, some will be thrust into an action-packed romance novel, courtesy yournovel.com. And as you may assume, the options are endless when you star in your own book.

The North Carolina company, created by Kathy M. Newbern and J.S. Fletcher, (a husband and wife writing team with pen name "Fletcher Newbern") in 1992, allows the customer to choose from 24 different novels, which may take you to Tahiti, Alaska, the Caribbean, Jamaica, Rome, a ski resort, and even a dude ranch.

Depending on the title selected, which varies from "Island of Love" to "Celebrating Romance" to "Let the Good Times Roll," the starring couple may find themselves skinny-dipping in the Caribbean, frolicking under a waterfall, or making love in a swinging hammock. But these novels aren't just about the romance - they are about adventure as well. The starring couple may find themselves chasing "bad guys" on wave runners off the U.S. coast, foiling a stalker on a luxury cruise ship, or wrestling with a cougar in the wild.

And the choices don't stop there. The starring couple can also decide whether their story is a "mild" or "wild" version, meaning "huggy-kissy" or "sexy-sweaty." According to yournovel.com, 99 percent of couples chose "wild" versions.

When ordering a novel, which come in paperback and hardback, customers are also asked 26 personal questions that will aid the authors in personalizing the story. These questions include names; hometown; places of work; eye and hair color; best friends; favorite perfume, cologne and music; and how long they've been a couple. Couples also have the option of adding their photo to the book's cover.

The idea of personalized romance novels dates back to early 1992, when Kathy was on a panel at a public relations conference and the ice breaker question was, "What would people be surprised to find out about you?" Kathy answered that she had written a yet-to-be published romance novel, which received quite a reaction from others on the panel. During lunchtime the same day, a friend of Kathy's joked, "Wouldn't it be great to read about yourself in one of those romance novels?"

Kathy laughed off the idea at first, but as she and then-boyfriend Fletcher were on their four-hour drive home, they realized it would be a great idea. They then outlined their first book, "Another Day in Paradise," on the back of a manila folder while on their way home and began writing the next day.

"We went with the idea and our lives have changed because of it," said Fletcher. "Many companies now offer personalized romance novels, but we're the people that started the concept."

The company launched in late 1992, and since then, Fletcher Newbern has written 16 of the current 24 novels available. The remaining novels were written by some of the ten contest winners who wrote, "Celebrating Romance," ten short stories selected to celebrate yournovel.com's 10th anniversary. Marcy Thomas, one of the contest winners, has written four novels as well as two of the four novellas in "Shore Thing II," and Jennifer Price and Geno Vincenzo have each written one novel.

According to Kathy, 52, and Fletcher, 57, between four to six thousand novels will be purchased this Valentine's Day season.

"Valentine's Day is our busiest holiday," said Fletcher. "But we sell thousands of copies throughout the year for those wanting to give novels for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and more."

Their customers, they said, range in age from 28 to 60 and even though the majority of their readers are women, men will pick up the books simply because they know adventure is involved.

This year, the company is introducing three new books: "High Seas Romance," a historical by Jennifer Price; "Missed Tryst," a detective novel by Geno Vincenzo; and "Negrit Everlasting," set at Couples Resorts, by Fletcher Newbern. A golf fantasy book is expected to be released mid-2008.

Paperbacks range from 150-190 pages and cost \$49.95, and hardbacks range from 200-230 pages and cost \$94.95. Photos can be added to the cover for an additional \$25. Priority shipping and handling is \$7 in the U.S. and \$16 on global orders. Valentine's Day orders should be placed by Sunday. Gift certificates are also available.

When asked if they themselves were "romantic" people, they answered, "Writing about romance has helped our relationship - we take bubble baths together, enjoy candlelight dinners together and still hold hands." The couple has been married for 13 years and has resided in Raleigh, North Carolina since 1995.

For more information, or to purchase a book, visit www.yournovel.com, or call (800) 444-3356.



Charlotte Carpenter returns to the Downey Civic Light Opera to star as Anna Held in "Tintypes," opening Feb. 21 and running through March 9. She previously starred as Sally Bowles in "Cabaret," Adelaide in "Guys and Dolls," and Nancy in "Oliver." For information, or to purchase tickets, call (562) 923-1714.

Downey IHOP serves up short stacks for a tall cause

BY BROOKE KARLI, STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY - Have you ever noticed that regardless of the time of day, pancakes are always good? Whether you have them for breakfast, lunch or dinner, they're just downright yummy.

On Tuesday, the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) in Downey will promote feasting on the sweet cakes from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. as they participate in National Pancake Day and raise money for the Children's Miracle Network.

For the third year in a row, IHOP will serve thousands of short stack buttermilk pancakes for free in an effort to gain donations for the Network, which will in turn donate 100 percent of proceeds to various organizations. Proceeds received from IHOPs located in the Los Angeles area will be donated to Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

"Our goal is for customers to have a heart to donate," said Giovana Montano, Downey IHOP assistant manager. "And in the process of them donating, they get to eat free pancakes."

According to Landmark Restaurant Group, which owns and operates 17 IHOPs including Downey's, IHOP as an overall franchise received and donated \$650,000 last year, serving more than 1.1 million pancakes.

"We hope to raise over \$750,000 overall this year," said Michele Lange, Landmark director of training. "In addition, we hope that each store that Landmark operates brings in at least \$2,500 each."

In the past, the event was held on "Fat Tuesday," the day before the beginning of Lent. But due to elections, the event was moved to this upcoming Tuesday.

Miss America will also be participating in the event and is expected to appear at the IHOP in Duarte.

Downey IHOP has been open since May of last year and is one of 1,300 IHOPs nationwide.

Basically what it all comes down to is any day is a sweet day when you are benefiting children in need, especially when you're topping it with maple syrup.

For more information, visit www.ihoppancakeday.com.

Book Club discusses 'Loving Frank'

DOWNEY - The Downey City Library Book Lover's Club will have their next meeting on Thursday from noon to 1 p.m. in the Cormack Room.

This month, the group will be discussing "Loving Frank" by Nancy Horan, a novel that examines the relationship between Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, the wife of a couple whose home Wright built in 1904.

The community is welcome to attend and light refreshments will be served.

Reservations are recommended by calling (562) 904-7360, ext. 32.

Christian club celebrating Valentine's

DOWNEY - The Downey Christian Women's Club invites the community, including men, to its Feb. 13 meeting at the Los Amigos Country Club. The day's program is titled "Be My Valentine."

The meeting's special feature will be a discussion of the Telephone Access Program and Ed Ugray will be the guest speaker. Neomi Hall will provide music.

The buffet luncheon starts at 11:45 a.m. and the cost is \$12. Reservations are requested by calling Sonja at (562) 862-4347 or Delores at (562) 868-7135.

New & noteworthy titles at the Downey City Library

Fiction

"Eye of Jade" by Diane Wei Liang. A new mystery series set in Beijing features a female detective who searches for a missing artifact, uncovering secrets of her nation's culture and her family's past.

"The Invention of Everything Else" by Samantha Hunt. The story of an unlikely friendship between eccentric inventor Nikola Tesla and a young chambermaid in the Hotel New Yorker, where Tesla lived out his last days.

"The Opposite of Love" by Julia Buxbaum. A young Manhattan attorney learns to fill the void in her life and become the person she secretly wants to be.

"The Senator's Wife" by Sue Miller. An insightful portrait of two marriages from the author of "The Good Mother" and "While I Was Gone."

"World Made By Hand" by James Howard Kunstler. The author takes an imaginative leap into the future to show what life may be like after climate change, the end of oil and global pandemics.

Non-Fiction

"Ageless Memory: Simple Secrets for Keeping Your Brain Young" by Harry Lorayne. The memory expert gives practical tips for remembering and retaining what you see, hear and read.

"The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor" by John Scott. An internationally known minister describes characteristics of an authentic church that conserves Scripture while combining tradition and culture.

"Martha Stewart Living Cookbook: the New Classics" by the editors of Martha Stewart Living. More than 1,200 recipes are included in this collection for every kind of cook and every occasion.

"Our Own Worst Enemy: Asking the Right Questions about Security to Protect Your Family and America" by Randall J. Larsen. What individuals and communities can do to keep America safe, from the director of the Institute for Homeland Security.

"Talking Hands" by Margalit Fox. In a remote village where everyone speaks sign language, scientists discover the essential ingredients of all human language and uncover new workings of the human mind.

Visit the library at 11121 Brookshire Ave. or www.downeylibrary.org or call (562) 904-7360 ext. 3 to check out or reserve these new titles.

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UGLY ME R	(10:20 1:15 4:10) 7:05 10:00
FOOL'S GOLD PG13	(10:00 1:00 4:00) 7:10 10:10
THE HOTCH & THE NAUGHTY PG13	(10:45 1:10 3:35) 6:00 8:25 10:50
THE EYE PG13	(12:05 2:40 5:15 7:50 10:25)
OVER HER DEAD BODY PG13	(11:15 1:35 3:55) 6:15 8:35 10:55
STRANGE WILDERNESS R	(11:35 2:05 4:35) 7:05 9:35
MEET THE SPARTANS PG13	(10:45 1:05 3:25) 5:45 8:05 10:25
RAMBO R	(11:30 2:00 4:30) 7:00 9:30
FIRST SUNDAY PG13	(11:00 1:35 4:10) 6:45 9:20
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THE EYE PG-13	(12:00, 2:25, 5:00), 7:40, 10:20
OVER HER DEAD BODY PG-13	(11:40, 2:10, 4:45), 7:10, 9:45
MEET THE SPARTANS PG-13	(12:25, 2:50, 5:20), 7:50, 10:25
NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN R	(2:20), 7:30
RAMBO R	(12:30, 3:00, 5:30), 7:55, 10:30
27 DRESSES PG-13	(11:10, 1:55, 4:35), 7:20, 10:05
CLOVERFIELD PG-13	(12:05, 5:05), 10:15
JUNO PG-13	(11:55, 2:35, 4:55), 7:35, 9:55
WELCOME HOME ROSCOE JENKINS PG-13	(11:05, 1:50, 4:40), 7:25, 10:10 (35MM)

Times for Friday-Wednesday, February 8-13, 2008
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Richard Carl Corse, 50, enjoyed life as bus driver

DOWNEY – Richard Carl Corse, a life-long Downey resident, passed away on Jan. 29. He was 50.

Corse was born on July 18, 1957 in Downey to Richard and Elinore Corse. He attended Alameda Elementary School and Woodruff Junior High, graduating from Downey High School in 1975. While in high school, he worked at a food concession for North American offices on Imperial Highway in Downey. He learned how to clean the stove, griddle and many techniques of cooking, finding his passion for cooking.



When later attending Cerritos College, he applied for a job for Pinetree Transportation, where he picked up special education students in a van and transported them to school. The company then sent him to Montreal, Canada to help drive three new Provost buses back to Torrance. At the age of 20, he was the youngest person to drive across the U.S. for the company. Some of his favorite trips were to San Francisco, Mammoth Mountain and Las Vegas.

While working for Pinetree, in 1980, he met Rose Mary Fiola and they became very good friends and were significant partners for 19 years.

Following seven years at Pinetree, Corse applied for a bus driver position for the Long Beach Unified School District, where he enjoyed interacting with students and taking them to various locations and field trips. While at LBUSD, he also served as a trainer, scheduler, dispatcher, and instructor of first aid to other bus drivers. After 16 years of service, Corse was able to retire.

Corse was preceded in death by his father, Richard, in 2004. He is survived by mother, Elinore; sister, Linda O'Connell; nephews, Ryan and Kevin O'Connell; niece, Katie O'Connell; cousin, Jeanne Martin; girlfriend, Rose Mary Fiola; three adopted "sisters," Kelly Holt, Angelique Fagan and Michelle Hermance; and two granddaughters, Stephanie Hermance and Barbara Fiola.

Graveside services will be held tomorrow at Rose Hills Memorial Park at 9 a.m., followed by a service at Messiah Lutheran Church at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Messiah Lutheran Memorial Fund, or the charity of your choice.

Michel David Werp will be missed by many

DOWNEY – Michel David Werp, longtime Downey resident, passed away on Jan. 27. He was 64.

Werp was born in Bemidji, Minn. and later moved to Huntington Park, Calif. He joined the U.S. Army in 1966 and served one year in the Republic of Vietnam as a crew chief on helicopters. He returned to California, got married, had a son and moved to Downey.

Werp also worked as a box printer and following retirement, spent time with animals and friends. He also enjoyed country music, cooking and barbecues.

Funeral services will be held Feb. 13 at 11 a.m. at the Veterans Cemetery in Riverside.



John Speare, left, and Patricia Speare Kreis both passed away recently. Services have been held.

Don Hopkins passes away at 43

DOWNEY – Don Hopkins of Downey passed away on Feb. 2. He was 43.

Hopkins is survived by wife, Cynthia; son, Weston; daughter, Lauren; mother, Martha; sisters, Teri Clough and Debbie Lanning; and brother, Will Hopkins.

Services will be held tomorrow at Calvary Baptist Church in Bellflower at 11 a.m.



Helen Nastos was a longtime resident

DOWNEY – Helen Nastos, Downey resident for 33 years, passed away on Jan. 29. She was 91.

She is survived by sister, Bessie Gonos; niece, Georgia (Dean) Gonos-Awanias; and great nieces, Valerie, Debbie and Cindy.

Services were held on Feb. 1 at St. George Greek Orthodox Church and Rose Hills Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

John A. Speare, Sr. passes away at 84

DOWNEY – John A. Speare Sr., also known as "papa," passed away on Nov. 9, 2007. He was 84.

Speare was born in Detroit, Mich. on March 19, 1923. His family moved to California when he was 13 years old, attending California Polytechnic High School in Los Angeles.

On Sept. 7, 1944, he married Mary Louise White, who preceded him in death in 1986.

Speare joined the Army during World War II and served in the European Theater in France and Germany. He earned numerous decorations, including American Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European Campaign Medal, and Victory Medal. He was honorably discharged from the military in 1945.

Following the Army, Speare worked on the Hoover Dam as a painter and participated in the Nevada National Guard from 1953-56. He also participated in the California National Guard from 1958-60. After the Dam was complete, he moved his family to Downey, where they resided until 1993. During that time, he worked for the city of Los Angeles, Department of Water and Power until retirement. He worked as a house painter and attended Trinity Baptist Church in Downey after retirement.

He is survived by sister, Ruth (Speare) Petersen; sons, John A. Speare, Jr. and Daniel J. Speare; grandchildren Cozette Wilder Livingston, Betsy Speare Hjort, James Andrew Wilder, Kimberly Speare Tipton, John Gerard Speare, and Bryan David Speare; and seven great-grandchildren.

Services were held at Trinity Baptist on Nov. 13.

Patricia Speare Kreis was a Downey grad

DOWNEY – Patricia "Tricia" Speare Kreis, longtime Downey resident, passed away on Jan. 19. She was 58.

Kreis was born on Aug. 2, 1949 in Boulder, Nev. and grew up in Downey, graduating from Downey High School in 1967. Throughout the years, she has lived in Florida, Virginia, Hawaii, Washington, and numerous cities within California, including Downey, Whittier, Huntington Beach, and Sunset Beach.

She spent the last 18 years of her life working at Ashland in the city of Commerce.

She is survived by brothers, John A. Speare, Jr. and Daniel J. Speare; children, Cozette Wilder Livingston and James Andrew Wilder; and grandchildren, Elizabeth Erin Wilder, Scott David Arthur Livingston, and Nicholas Tyler Thomas Livingston.

A memorial service was held at Kreis' home in Sunset Beach on Feb. 2.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation.

Downey class of '78 celebrating reunion

DOWNEY – Downey High School's class of 1978 will celebrate their 30-year reunion on Sept. 20.

For information, call Mike Schroeder at (909) 597-9300 or e-mail Marlene Masone at mymyl@msn.com.

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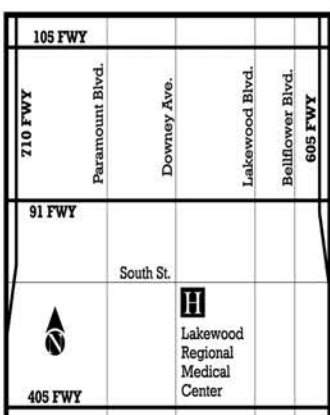
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City officials gathered at St. Raymond's Catholic School breakfast, celebrating the beginning of Catholic Schools Week. Pictured are, left to right, Mayor Pro Tem and Deacon Mario Guerra, Police Captain Rick Esteves, Principal Sister Kathleen O'Connell, Fire Chief Mark Sauter, Police Chief Roy Campos, and Police Sergeant Dean Milligan.

Calming the chaos during a disaster

By GWYNN GUSTAFSON, KIWANIS CLUB OF DOWNEY

DOWNEY – Are you prepared for flash floods, wild fires or earthquakes? Many in California found out the hard way this past year, running for their lives with family and pets. Returning to find total devastation, even the loss of records that could have proved how much they lost for insurance purposes.

With a records organizing system, they might have had that important information in one place during their quick exit.

Emilio Rocha, a retired postmaster and now president of Ultimate Records Organizing Systems, Inc., told the Kiwanis Club of Downey that he "learned the hard way about the importance of organizing records when his car was stolen." With the car went all the identifying numbers the police needed to file a report.

Even though he didn't get his car back, he learned a very valuable lesson: to gather all his important records in one place. So he set about finding a better way to prepare for a disaster.

He learned that family, friends and neighbors had written down a few bits of information and given copies to family members. Then the family members moved away and the information changed as cars were bought and sold, insurance plans cancelled or changes, children were born and medical records grew.

The next step was to organize all the information into a comprehensive and easy-to-use book. The Ultimate Records Organizing System has pages for all the details of your life: insurance policies; real estate Map Book details; lists of household property (Rocha reminds all, "this is information that insurance companies require in order to reimburse for loss"); banks, savings, loans, credit card numbers and who can sign; and dozens of categories not listed here.

Rocha also recommend taking photos of your entire household – all personal property and equipment – and including those photos in the Ultimate Records Organizing System. CDs make this an easy task.

"Organize as if your family depended upon it," Rocha said. "Because they do."

To order a copy of the book, call (562) 861-7694, email Rocha at Emilioirocha@hotmail.com, or visit www.ultimaterecordsorganizer.com.

For information on the Kiwanis Club of Downey, visit www.downeykiwanis.org.

COBOS

Continued from page 8

"I don't exactly have what you call a strong team this year," Shelton also said earlier in the season.

Once again, he was right. The Vikings against the rest of the San Gabriel Valley League seemed just a bit smaller in size comparison, except when matched up with Warren.

It didn't seem like much confidence was installed in this team. But the Vikings never gave up. They pushed and pushed and pushed.

Look where that got them. They arrived on the 12 win mark which will most likely get them a wildcard berth (not the 10 win mark which was a mistake in previous articles).

Yes, they most likely will be driving across what might feel like the whole entire state of California, but at least they're in.

Warren on the other hand will most likely not be. And for the seniors on Downey's team, no sugar or honey will ever taste as sweet as this moment.

Free immunizations for children at Maude Price

DOWNEY - St. Francis Medical Center, in cooperation with the Downey Unified School District, is sponsoring free immunizations for children ages 4 to 18 on Feb. 27 at Maude Price Elementary School.

Children can be immunized for chicken pox, hepatitis A and B, DPT/Tdap, MMR, polio, meningococcal, human papilloma virus, and receive TB skin test.

All immunizations are free and no appointment is necessary. A parent or guardian must accompany children, and should also bring the child's official immunization card with past immunization history. Immunizations will be given from 3 to 7 p.m.

Maude Price Elementary is located at 9525 Tweedy Lane. Their phone number is (562) 904-3575.

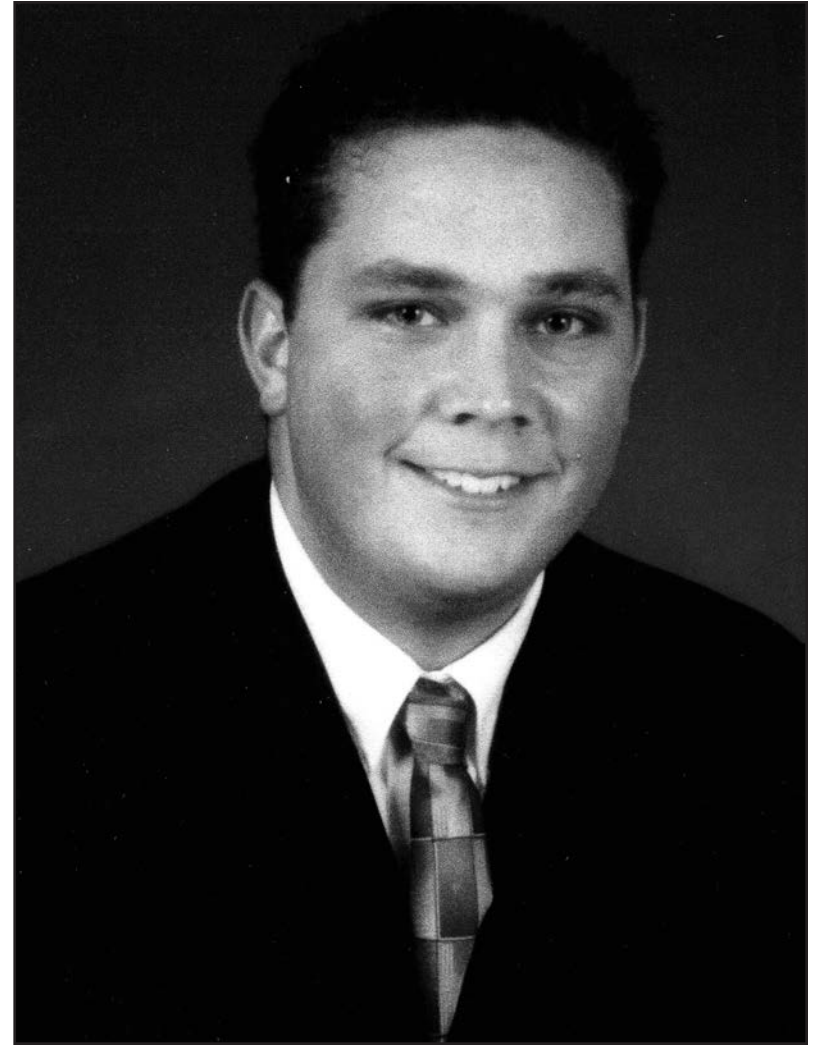


Roy Jimenez, immediate past president of the Kiwanis Club of Downey and chairman of the Citadel Shopping Center fundraiser in October of last year, recently announced that the \$2,000 goal was surpassed by raising \$3,010. The funds will be used to further the Club's community projects such as Concerts in the Park, Rancho Los Amigos Kids Day, and the La Casita Rehabilitation Center Christmas Party.

Kyle Lang to leave on two-year mission

DOWNEY - Kyle Lang, member of the Downey First Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, has been chosen to serve at the Rapid City Mission in South Dakota, a Spanish-speaking mission serving North Dakota, South Dakota, and parts of Wyoming, Nebraska, and Minnesota.

Lang is the third son of Jon and Lisa Lang to serve a mission for the church. He is a life-long resident of Downey and attended Rio Hondo Elementary, Griffiths Middle and Warren High Schools. He is also an Eagle Scout and hopes to continue his education following his two-year mission.



Kyle Lang, life-long Downey resident and member of the Downey First Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will serve a two-year mission at the Rapid City Mission in South Dakota.

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Dale Jervis has become a staple in the Downey community—plain and simple. His family has called this beautiful area home for generations and nothing makes him prouder than to do his part to make a difference—from his volunteer efforts with the local animal shelter to his generous contributions to the local school systems to his work helping people achieve their real estate dreams.

The truth is, you're not likely to find a real estate professional who knows the intricacies of the local market like Dale. When you're looking not only for the right home, but the right neighborhood to fit your needs, Dale has the knowledge to make it happen. When you add the fact that he's been in the business since 1983, it seems only fitting that he's considered the local expert. Put simply, when it comes to your next move, there's no better professional to turn to than Dale. Give him a call today. You'll be glad you did!

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Rowena Dominguez recently joined the staff at Century 21 My Real Estate. "Rowena is a great addition to our team," said Steve Roberson, Century 21 My Real Estate owner and broker. "She has an infectious personality and an outstanding work ethic. She is self-motivated, community-minded and goal-orientated. I feel confident her clients will be pleased with her work." To contact Dominguez, call (562) 927-2626.



Century 21 My Real Estate welcomes Patty Gonzalez to their office. "Patty has an enthusiastic approach and great people skills," said Angie Pierce, Century 21 My Real Estate office manager. "Her background with attention to detail as an optometric technician and organizational skills will serve her clients very well. Patty is a Notary Public also." To reach Gonzalez, call (562) 927-2626.



Raul Palacio is one of Century 21 My Real Estate's new agents. "I think Raul will be an outstanding realtor," said Roger Nordin, Century 21 My Real Estate vice president of relocation and marketing. "Raul's experience in property management, Notary Public, and education in business administration and speech will enhance the services to his clients." To contact Palacio, call (562) 927-2626.



Meylang Espinosa recently joined the staff at Century 21 My Real Estate. "Action is how I describe Meylang," said Steve Roberson, Century 21 My Real Estate owner and broker. "She has a can-do approach, is recognized for participation in the community, friendly, and very organized. She is a great addition to our team." To reach Espinosa, call (562) 927-2626.



Economic forecasting at best a dicey affair

By HENRY VENERACION, STAFF WRITER

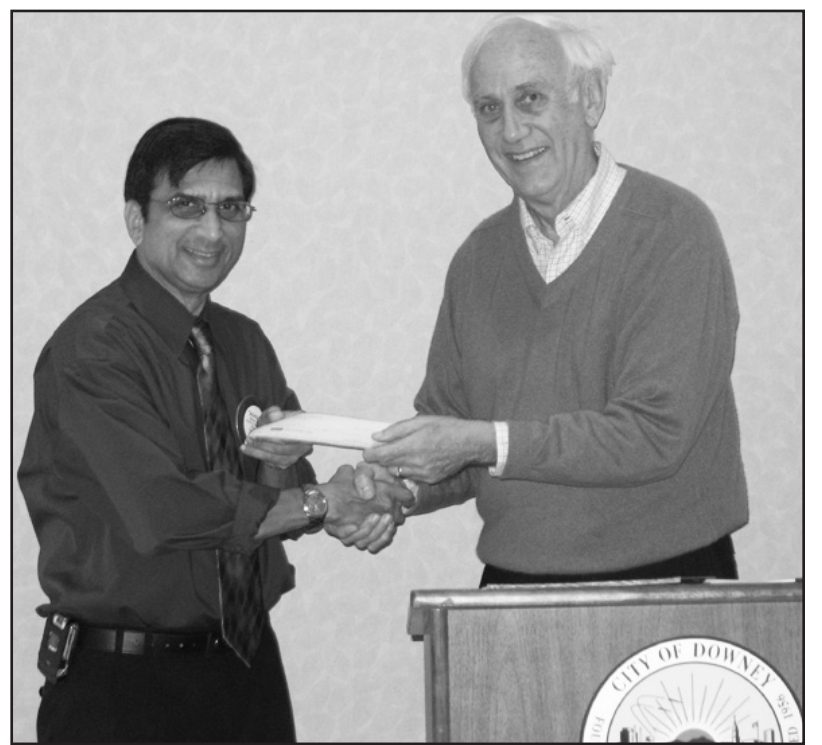
Judging by recent economic reports—by academia and government officials—the threat of a recession is real. Especially if the expected impact of the proposed fiscal stimulus package doesn't materialize, or if it becomes a matter of too little, too late. As in everything, timing is important. Gas prices are creeping up once again, food prices are also up, and consumer spending—the biggest component of GDP that traditionally leads in driving the economy—has lately been markedly tentative.

The recent 300 to 400-point plunge of the Dow index is causing consternation among stockholders while the credit markets have shriveled somewhat because of the sub-prime crisis, resulting in a tightening of credit. We're all aware of the inordinate number of foreclosures bedeviling the housing industry. There is even a lingering concern about the rising unemployment rate.

The one bright spot, the economic pundits say, is exports, but positive progress in this area is obviated by the fall in the value of the dollar. Even so, they hedge their forecast by citing the continuing strength of the technology sector and the economy's solid productivity performance.

There is an even closer crunching sound—the grating sound caused by an impending \$14 billion across-the-board state budget cut. This has already caused shivers in school district circles. Other significant problems have been muted by the current raucous election process. The sooner the smoke clears from these electoral fireworks, the better we'll be able to see the basic contours of the next economic challenge.

Some economists assure us the economy as a whole is basically strong and resilient. If this is the case, and we hope it is, fine. This is true, say they also, of the world economy. Anyway, most of economic analysis depends on past economic data. It is to be hoped that our economic experts' present prognostications hit their mark, or at least don't fall too wide of it.



Ashvin Patel, left, director of production at Arc of Southeast Los Angeles County, accepted a \$53,000 grant from Dick Holmes, which was awarded by the Kiwanis Foundation to replace worn-out worktables with adjustable, safer tables.

Cardiovascular Wellness Fair, Feb. 23

DOWNEY – Downey Regional Medical Center will host its annual Cardiovascular Wellness Fair on Feb. 23 from 9 a.m. to noon in the hospital's conference rooms.

The fair, which is open to the public, will feature a variety of complimentary screenings and activities, including carotid screenings, blood pressure checks, respiratory screenings, consultations with DRMC pharmacists, nutrition consultations, massages, and information from diabetes educator Elsa Saucedo, R.N., as well as giveaways and door prizes.

The fair will also feature a heart healthy snack, served around 9 a.m., and a presentation by interventional cardiologist Jack Dobkin, M.D.

For more information, call (562) 904-5413.

For display advertising rates, call Dorothy Michael or Mary Forney at (562) 904-3668

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 "Janet Baez & Benny Sanabria are outstanding real estate agents. Janet & Benny did a good job for us." – Julie Munoz

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Avoid foreclosure – help is available

CONTRIBUTED BY JEANETTE BAUMANN, DOWNEY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

Realtors build communities in part by expanding homeownership opportunities and getting people into homes of their own. Those are noble goals, but helping homeowners stay in their homes is also important to sustain those communities.

Nubia Aguirre, 2008 president of the Downey Association of Realtors (DAR), explained that in this marketplace of rising mortgage delinquencies and foreclosures, that goal can be challenging, to say the least.

Over the past few years, lenders invented new types of mortgages to help families buy their first home and refinance their existing mortgage. Many of those mortgages helped families without cash for a down payment, or with less-than-perfect credit, qualify for loans known as "subprime" loans.

Subprime loans have a higher interest rate and higher costs, such as prepayment penalties. In recent years, a very popular, widely available mortgage product was the hybrid adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM). Hybrid ARMs have an initial period with a lower interest rate ("teaser rate") followed by significant increases over the remainder of the loan.

A growing number of borrowers with hybrid ARMs and other non-traditional forms of loans are seeing monthly payments jump beyond their means. With overall credit markets tightening, refinancing can be difficult but there is hope, according to Aguirre.

"When monthly payments become too much, the first thing to do is to speak up," she said. "You need to seek the help of professionals, whether they are financial counselors, often available through local non-profit counseling centers, or your lender."

While many people believe that telling a lender about financial difficulties will only hasten a move to foreclosure, borrowers should remember that lenders do not like to foreclose on mortgages.

"Taking possession of your house, maintaining it and then attempting to sell it will nearly always be a losing financial proposition for your bank," Aguirre said. "Therefore, talk with your lender sooner rather than later to try to arrange new repayment terms."

She said DAR can provide assistance to troubled borrowers by explaining sources of help and referring them to counseling.

"If your lender is not willing to restructure your loan, DAR can refer you to other responsible lenders in your area," Aguirre said. "Some elderly borrowers have even found solutions to their mortgage difficulties through reverse mortgages and other creative, but responsible, tools."

Above all, beware of consumer scams often advertised as "We Buy Houses for Cash," or similar slogans that sound too good to be true, because they are, she warned.

Project HOPE NOW is a voluntary alliance of major lenders who have agreed in principle to assist qualified homeowners who are on the verge of default due to resetting adjustable-rate mortgages. The national toll free number is (888) 995-HOPE to reach a counselor for advice and further referral.

The National Association of Realtors Web site also has several important consumer brochures that can be downloaded free of charge.

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