

The Downey Patriot



Families get special gifts
See Page 10



Learn more about Ed Lee
See Page 3



Boyd lands scholarship
See Page 9

Friday, December 26, 2008

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



Downey High School ASB students visited the Downey Retirement Center to celebrate the holidays with seniors. Photo courtesy Downey High School ASB

Students brighten up senior home

DOWNEY — Members of Downey High School's ASB donated some of their time to visit with senior citizens at the Downey Retirement Center recently.

Students made Christmas cards, brought gifts, and donated cookies to decorate with the seniors.

"Downey High ASB members were so glad they could attend the

senior home and were happy that they put a smile on the seniors' faces," said Ashley Campuzano, junior class president at Downey.

"They really enjoyed spending time with them and exchanging stories from their past. It was a good experience for Downey High School."

Downey earns 'F' in preservation

■ Conservancy group chides Downey in annual report card.

BY ERIC PIERCE,
CITY EDITOR

DOWNEY — When it comes to protecting and restoring historical pieces of real estate, Downey gets a failing grade from the Los Angeles Conservancy.

Downey received an "F" grade from the Conservancy in its 2008 Los Angeles County Preservation Report Card, a yearly assessment of historical preservation efforts in local cities.

The Conservancy, which claims to be the nation's largest local historic preservation organization, released the 31-page report last week.

Downey was labeled a "preservation truant" for not having an ordinance in place that allows designation of historic landmarks or districts. The city has also failed to create a historic preservation commission, hire a historic preservation officer, or conduct a survey of historic architectural resources, the report notes.

The report card also claims Downey has not taken advantage of the Mills Act, "the single most important economic incentive program in California for the restora-

tion and preservation of qualified historic buildings by private property owners."

"Since the Mills Act is typically the only economic incentive tool available to local jurisdictions, the existence of a program at the local level is a good indicator of a particular city's commitment to historic preservation," the report claims.

Thirty-one cities received failing grades from the Conservancy, including nearby Bellflower, Paramount, Santa Fe Springs, La Mirada and Cerritos.

Seven cities earned A's, including Long Beach and Whittier.

"Los Angeles County is a treasure trove of architecturally and culturally significant sites," reads the report, which includes photographs of the Rives Mansion and Speedee McDonald's within its pages. "From the early adobes of colonial days, to Craftsman and period revival structures of the early 20th Century, to stunning examples of Art Deco, to groundbreaking mid-century modernism and beyond, the county has an extremely rich and diverse architectural heritage.

"This heritage is also surprisingly vulnerable, with cultural resources facing ongoing threats of demolition and insensitive alteration. The most effective protections against these threats often lie in the hands of local government."

Kiwanis Club brings holiday cheer to La Casita

BY MARY FORNEY,
STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY — Hope, peace, and goodwill to men — these sentiments shine this Christmas at La Casita Treatment Center.

Among those dispensing hope to the 22 women currently living at the shelter is 55-year-old Linn Erickson. A former addict for 20 years, Erickson has worked more than four years as a counselor for La Casita.

"I tell them it's not just about addiction — it's also understanding the history of whatever pain happened in their life that makes them want to do drugs," Erickson said. "At La Casita, we love them until they love themselves. We give them a God-given gift from the heart."

Since the residents are without incomes, many local city, civic, and church organizations stepped forward this season to donate gifts to the mothers to give to their children Christmas morning.

Some local groups even held Christmas parties for the mothers and their children.

The Kiwanis Club of Downey has made hosting a La Casita Christmas party a yearly goodwill project. Santa Claus showed up in the middle of this year's party, making it known to the mothers and their children that they have not been forgotten. Santa handed out early presents to each of the children — even calling them by name.

"Despite the challenging economic times during this holiday season, the Downey Kiwanis family continues committed to helping the children in need, and bringing a lasting improvement to our community and environment," said Kiwanis Club member Fernando

"I was surprised at the support from the community. It's unconditional and many of us don't get that from our families."

—Bibiana Leamons,
La Casita resident

Vasquez.

To show appreciation, the women served lunch to the visiting Kiwanis that they prepared themselves. Wanting to entertain the guests, the residents sang Christmas carols and some gave testimonies about living in the center.

"I was surprised at the support from the community," said La Casita resident Bibiana Leamons, 33. "It's unconditional and many of us don't get that from our families."

Tears were shed as 24-year-old Nancy Maria spoke about the six months she has spent at La Casita.

"I have learned how to be a woman, a mother, and a friend," Maria said.

Like many of the women who enter La Casita, Maria was separated from her children when she first entered rehabilitation. She had to earn back the right to live with her three young children by successfully completing steps in the rehabilitative program. Surrounded by the other La Casita mothers and their children, Maria spoke with an emotional waver in her voice.

"The staff has been so supportive — this is like family," Maria said. "I'm happy to be here."

La Casita will open its doors



Santa Claus paid a visit to the La Casita Treatment Center in Downey last week, part of a Christmas party thrown by the Kiwanis Club of Downey. Photo by Mary Forney

for outside family members to join the residents for Christmas dinner. Not all residents will have family visit them, so the La Casita staff and community organizations have

rallied around the women and children to keep them uplifted during the holidays.

"There's no greater gift than giving hope," Vasquez said.

Chinese delegates take in Downey

■ Officials from Anhui Province tour Downey as part of government training program.

BY HENRY VENERACION,
STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY — Thirty ranking Chinese officials from Anhui Province were given a guided tour of the 200-bed Downey Regional Medical Center Tuesday, part of a scheduled 85-day training program visiting various institutions in the U.S. sponsored jointly by Woodbury University and U.S. China Business Institute (UCBI).

The delegation represented an array of political, economic, scientific, and cultural leaders from the province of 60 million, bearing such titles as the director of public security in the province, chief judge of the No. 4 Civil Court for the Anhui Provincial People's Supreme Court, and deputy director of the Administration of Radio, Film and Television of Anhui Province.

The delegation was split into three groups, one led by Downey Regional COO Rob Fuller, a second one by Deb Gail, and a third by Heather Conwell. At the question-and-answer period that followed,

moderated by CEO Ken Stroppe, Chinese-speaking Dr. Julie Sun acted as interpreter.

Anhui Province, approximately twice the size of California, lies about 600 miles south of Beijing, and some 100 miles or so west of Shanghai. An internet profile describes the province's raised aspirations to boost its economy and its need for "elite leaders in many levels of government to enhance a stronger leadership, higher government efficiency and a more comprehensive inter-departmental cooperation."

In other words, Anhui is aware of globalization, and it wants a part in it, it wants to shape "a prosperous future" for itself.

The information profile also mentions that to-date, more than 150 Fortune 500 companies have made investments in the province, signaling an acceptance, no matter how limited, of capitalism's market principles and a free flow of ideas—a far cry from the Chinese government's rigidity of approach in the past.



It was interesting to note that the delegation was intensely interested in some of the administrative and operational details at DRMC, considering that the large hospitals in China's biggest cities, we are told, have 1,000-2,000 beds.

Their questions centered on such topics as the hospital's command/control structure; method of payment for hospital services, and the government's share in it; how doctors are compensated; ethical medical practice, etc.

In welcoming the delegates to Downey, Mayor Mario Guerra elicited visible excitement when he mentioned among other things that Downey was home to the largest Coca-Cola bottling plant in the world, that China had the second largest such facility, and that the space shuttle that went to the moon (the Apollo) was built here.

The group next departs for the east coast, including stops in Washington, D.C. and Boston.

Resident extends good cheer to neighboring community

BY MARY FORNEY,
STAFF WRITER

BELL GARDENS – It was 15 years ago when Downey resident Janet Minnig first noticed Bell Manor and the people who live there.

Located on the corner of Garfield and Eastern avenues in Bell Gardens, the assisted living facility has housed mentally and emotionally disturbed residents since the 1970's.

"I saw people sitting outside looking so sad," Minnig said. "So I called there and asked if anyone did anything for them for Christmas."

Discovering that many of the residents are forgotten by their families and community, Minnig went to her boyfriend (who is now her husband) for help. The couple decided to forgo giving each other Christmas presents that year and bought gifts for each of the 108 Bell Manor residents instead.

Minnig has returned every Christmas since then and now brings a variety of hosts from Downey with her. Santa Claus arrives to hand out gifts and the residents are treated to an old-fashioned ice cream float.

The Christmas ice cream social became a Bell Manor tradition seven years ago after Minnig beseeched donations from the Downey First Christian Church congregation. Minnig said former Downey residents Bettie and Wendell Skelton did not hesitate to come forward and offer Minnig assistance with the Christmas party.

Bettie, a member of the Soroptimist International and Sertoma Clubs of Downey, solicited assistance from the community



Downey resident Janet Minnig and Sertoma Club members Pat and Larry McCool scoop ice cream at the Bell Manor Christmas party in Bell Gardens. Photo by Mary Forney

organizations. Wendell, who worked for Dryers Icecream in Commerce, got his company to begin donating to Minnig's cause.

The Downey Soroptimists and Sertomans now make Minnig's Bell Manor Christmas party a yearly project, from collecting funds to shopping and gift wrapping. Minnig's family also pitches in to help.

"The mental people don't have many people that care about them and many don't have families that come see them," said Bell Manor Administrator Yolanda Zuniga.

"Maybe 25 percent have family that will take them home for Christmas or will visit with them."

This year, each of the 108 residents received a new zippered jacket, shirt, socks, booties, hygiene products, and snacks at the Christmas party.

"All of this came from family, friends, Downey First Christian Church members, and the Soroptimists and Sertomans," Minnig said. "We don't hold fundraisers – we just beg."

The Soroptimists and Sertomans also drop clothes off

throughout the year.

"They always need clothes – especially jackets – because some will sell them for cigarettes," said Bell Manor Assistant Terry McCall. "They can't help it – it's their illness."

"The Salvation Army and a Catholic Church come and sing Christmas carols every year, but this is the only Christmas party they have ever had. This is the highlight of the year for us."

Help decorate Downey's float next week

DOWNEY – The Downey Rose Float Association is seeking volunteers to help decorate its float beginning today and through Tuesday.

Volunteers can work between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. at the float site, located at 13030 Erickson Ave., on the south campus of Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

Volunteers are advised to wear old clothing and dress warm. The Association is also accepting donations of empty coffee cans and soup cans, and will be selling

memorabilia.

Volunteers must sign a release form and volunteers under the age of 18 need a parent's signature. Forms are available online at www.downeyrose.org and will also be available at the float site.

This year's entry, "Broadway's Golden Age," designed by Kelley Roberts and Jason Redfox, will feature Miss Downey Sarah Lopez and her Court, Mayor Mario Guerra, and Pastor Don Metcalf from Desert Reign Church riding atop the float on New Year's Day.

Guild plans tour of Huntington Library

DOWNEY – The Downey Symphony Guild will host an excursion to the Huntington Library in San Marino on Jan. 8. The community is invited.

The jaunt could be called "An embarrassment of riches" for the Huntington Library is not only a library but an art gallery, botanical gardens, and in addition to other new attractions, has a spectacular "Garden of Flowing Fragrance."

This Chinese scholar's garden is California's first Chinese garden open to the public. Fifty Chinese artisans were brought to the site to make sure it honored Chinese traditions. Six pavilions of hand-carved wood and five bridges were built and a pond was created that frames the distant San Gabriel Mountains.

The art collection of British portraits is considered one of the greatest outside of London. Two famous favorites there are Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" and Lawrence's "Pinkie." "Worth the

price of admission," say art lovers.

There will be time to explore independently the many treasures on the grounds. The café there serves light meals, pastries, drinks and sandwiches. Reservations are required for the Rose Garden tea room.

Space on the bus is limited so early reservations are suggested. The bus will be at the flagpole near the Downey library at 8 a.m. on Jan. 8. It will leave promptly at 9:30 a.m. A light snack will be served to passengers. The outing will end at 1:30 p.m. for the return ride to Downey.

Reservations are \$15 per person. Make checks payable to Downey Symphony Guild and mail to 9700 Garnish Dr., Downey, CA 90240-3003.

For more information, call (562) 869-2120.

– Rosalie Sciortino, Downey Symphony Guild

Newcomers plan meeting Jan. 12

DOWNEY – The Downey Newcomers Club will hold their annual New Year's luncheon Jan. 12 at Los Amigos Country Club at 10:30 a.m.

Cost is \$10 for members. Attendees should check with the guard gate if they need a ride to the club house.

RSVP by calling Paula Lou Roberts at (562) 861-2545.

Fashion show at Christian meeting

DOWNEY – A fashion show by L&M Fashions will highlight the Jan. 14 meeting of the Downey Christian Women's Club.

The meeting is themed "New Beginnings." Hermina Vink will provide music and Bonnie Smith will be the guest speaker.

The lunch meeting begins at 11:45 a.m. at the Los Amigos Country Club. Cost is \$12. Both men and women are invited to attend.

Reservations are requested by calling Sonja at (562) 862-4347.

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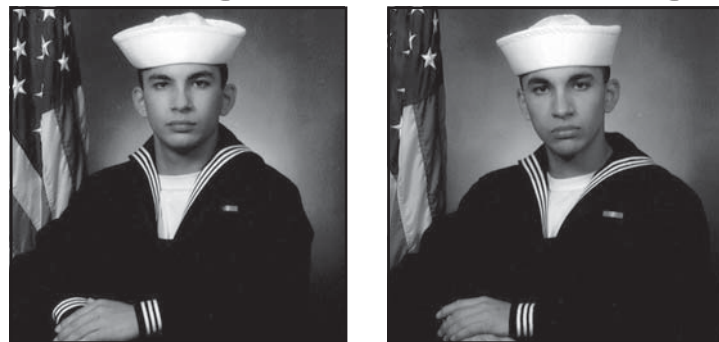
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Double Honor Javier Rodriguez Jr. & Patrick Rodriguez



Graduates from Downey, CA following family tradition to enlist in the US Navy (Seebees) and defend our country for freedom. They have made their family proud including their mother Marbella Palomar, their grandparents Maria/Antonio Abeyta (ex Navy Seal) and their uncles/aunts (Navy Personnel) we are Happy to have them home for the Holidays!



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The Knights of Columbus, Downey Council, distributed gifts to 100 children ages 1-14 this week. While waiting their turn, the children, who were invited by the Exchange Club Family Support Center in Downey and the Human Services Association in Bell Gardens, enjoyed hot dogs and punch. This year marked the 20th year the Knights have the party for children in Downey and adjacent cities.

City attorney Ed Lee's expertise a boon to Downey

By HENRY VENERACION, STAFF WRITER

Downey city attorney Edward W. Lee has had over 30 years of continuous experience dealing with redevelopment and municipal law issues (planning, land use, zoning, eminent domain), and it shows.

At Council meetings, he sits on the mayor's right, and answers matters referred to him in a firm, clear voice. He exudes an air of confidence, indicative of a man in total grasp of his subject.

Destiny led him to Downey, at a critical juncture in its history when an aggressive redevelopment program downtown, and strategic revitalization efforts in general, are pretty much the order of the day.

Lee's very first job after getting a BA in psychology from UC-Davis in 1977 was with the Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency. Never leaving the redevelopment area, he found himself a few years later employed as a project manager for the city of Glendale. By this time convinced of the wealth of opportunities the field offered, and actually enjoying the challenges his job brought, Lee did the next logical thing to advance his career—enroll at Southwestern University School of Law. Attending evening classes, he got his Juris Doctorate degree in 1985.

Born in San Antonio, Tex. but raised in Pasadena, Lee says his parents, who immigrated from Canton, China, had always stressed the value of education to the children (he has two older brothers), as second only to the twin virtues of integrity and honesty. The injunction, 'Do the right thing', still resonates in his mind. His mother, he recalls, was the rock of the family and exerted the most influence on him.

For 12 years, he worked in a staff capacity. Then, as a full-fledged lawyer, he gradually solidified his niche in his chosen area as member of the law firm of Oliver, Sandifer, Murphy & Lee.

Two years ago, he replaced Charles Vose as city attorney of Downey, after serving as Vose's primary backup for a number of years (in total, he had been involved with Downey affairs to this point for 12 years). He had also meanwhile joined the prestigious Los Angeles firm of Best Best & Krieger, where he is a partner in its municipal law practice group. The firm boasts 200 lawyers, representing expertise in all areas of the law.

Today, in addition to serving the city of Downey, Lee concurrently serves as city attorney of the cities of Bell, Covina and Gardena (his practice group has a portfolio of 24 municipalities in all). He also acts as special or general counsel for various redevelopment agencies.

Over the years, he served as assistant city attorney of Covina from 1987-2005 and of the city of Hermosa Beach from 1989-1994, as well as assistant special counsel for the Riverside Redevelopment Agency and assistant general counsel for Compton Redevelopment Agency.

Thus his heavy grounding in the areas that at the moment press on Downey most. As well, he is an expert on the Brown Act, labor and employment law, and environmental and natural resources law. His involvement with the problems of other cities moreover equips him with a ready insight and a framework with which to approach similar concerns here. In this regard, he estimates he devotes roughly 60 percent of his time to planning and

land use, 30 percent to public works contracts, and 10 percent to administrative law issues (the boil water order, building permits, general police matters, etc.)

Where he lacks expertise in a certain legal area, he can always count on back-up knowledge from his colleagues. In sum, as a partner at Best Best & Krieger, Lee can draw on a shared "common fund of knowledge."

As a result therefore of right decisions made, seriousness of purpose, and a solid educational base, you can tell he thoroughly enjoys what he's doing. After all, when you talk about the law, Lee says, you're talking about the 'total life experience'. And "it is always changing, as well as its interpretation. Thus we have to keep up with developments in the field all the time."

A physical fitness devotee, he has progressed from gym rat to running ("a little") to bicycling. At any rate, he stays active. Prior to leaving for UC-Davis, he studied for a year at UCLA. Thus he roots for the Bruins as well as the Lakers. Reading detective novels, science fiction, and such, relaxes him. Visiting Canton is a goal. He says he and his wife almost went last year to Beijing for the



Olympics, but they felt there might be too many people there for comfort, so they settled for Hong Kong instead. Their past travels nevertheless have included trips to Canada, Mexico, Europe (Italy, France, Spain, England), and the Baltic (Norway, Sweden, St. Petersburg, etc.).

Married for 33 years and a resident of San Dimas, Lee has two adult sons. His advice to youth: "There are some new intriguing areas that promise legal opportunities, if one is so inclined, including environmental and intellectual property law, but in the end, if you can be passionate about something, that's the work you should put your effort in."

City picking up Christmas trees

DOWNEY – Downey residents can discard their Christmas trees by placing them curbside on their regular trash collection day.

Trees will be picked up beginning today and will continue through Jan. 16.

Trees should be free of stands and decorations and not placed in a bag. Trees over four feet tall should be cut in half. Flocked trees are OK.

The trees will be collected by CalMet Services, the city's franchised refuse hauler, and taken to the Puente Hills Landfill.

Trees can also be dropped off at the city's public works yard, 12324 Belflower Blvd., behind Independence Park, beginning Dec. 29.

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Zella Whalan was resident, volunteer

DOWNEY – A memorial service was held Monday for Zella Whalan, a longtime Downey resident who died Dec. 16.

She was born Nov. 8, 1913 in Denver, Colo. She was the youngest of seven – a brother and a sister died at 1 years old.

She was working at a 5-cent and 10-cent store when she met Oran Timothy Whalan. They married April 10, 1932 (when she was 18) and two years later they had a son, Oran Richard.

In January, 1937 they moved to California. In 1939, they went into the ice cream truck business. They sold ice cream until 1952 when they began operating a soda fountain in the Rexal drug store on Downey Avenue.

In 1954, Zella began work at the J.C. Penney's on Firestone Boulevard and became chief buyer in the woman's clothing department.

With her husband, she attended Grace Baptist Church in Downey, where she volunteered in the choir,



organized a prayer chain, and drove members to their doctor's appointments.

When Grace Baptist closed, she moved to First Baptist Church of Downey, where she continued her volunteerism, including work as a church greeter and Sunday School teacher.

Services were held Monday at First Baptist Church of Downey. Interment was at Rose Hills.

Hospital hosting blood drive

DOWNEY – Downey Regional Medical Center will host a blood drive for the American Red Cross on Dec. 30 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Conference Room B, located in the hospital's basement.

Blood donors will receive a gift certificate for a free ice cream from Cold Stone Creamery, a voucher for two tickets to a Los Angeles Clippers game (good only on pre-determined dates) and a T-shirt.

To register, go to www.givelife.org, search for location (Downey Regional Medical Center), or enter the following code: DOWREG. You can also call (562) 904-5321 to schedule an appointment.

Trip to Pechanga scheduled Jan. 5

DOWNEY – The Woman's Club of Downey is sponsoring a bus trip to the Pechanga Resort and Casino on Jan. 5.

Funds raised by the trip will go to the club's scholarship fund.

The bus will leave the Woman's Club at 8 a.m. and return at approximately 6 p.m. Cost is \$6 for Woman's Club members and \$11 for non-members, and includes a \$5 voucher for casino play.

Guests must be at least 21 years old. For reservations, call Jeanine Keys at (562) 923-6620 or Doris Patterson at (562) 869-0377.

William Case Jr. served in WWII

DOWNEY – William J. Case Jr., a veteran of World War II, died Dec. 19 of natural causes. He passed away surrounded by family.

He was born Jan. 17, 1919 in Los Angeles, where he started work at age 12 as a newsboy.

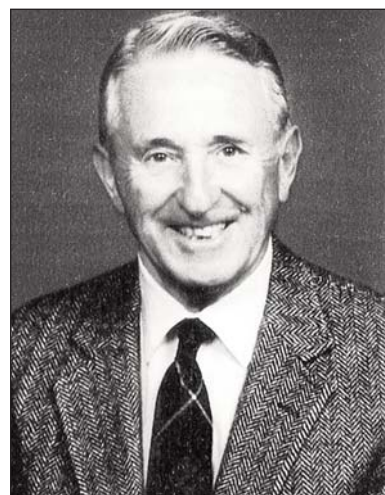
He served 4 1/2 years in Alaska and in the U.S. Army's Asiatic and European Campaigns during World War II.

During his early military years, while on a weekend pass and in uniform, he met his future wife, Charlsie, at a dance she attended with her parents. While stationed away, they corresponded by mail and visited each other when they could.

Returning from Europe, and with the end of the war in sight, they married. They began their life together in a small home in Downey.

He attended Loyola University on the G.I. Bill, and graduated and worked as a stockbroker. After working for 36 years, he retired as an account vice president at Paine, Webber, Jackson and Curtis in Long Beach. He also served on the board of directors at St. Mary's Hospital.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Charlsie; five sons, Dennis



(Lisa), Stephen (Gina), Paul (Debra), Timothy (Caryn), and Thomas (Alma); grandchildren, Tracey, Paul William, Renee, Ann Marie, Megan, Samuel, Sarah, and Emily; great-granddaughter, Alexandria, and brother to Dorothy (Don).

A viewing will take place Monday from 4-7 p.m. at Miller-Mies Mortuary in Downey, and will be followed by a rosary. A mass will be held Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. Burial will follow at 1:30 p.m. at Riverside National Cemetery, 22495 Van Buren Blvd., in Riverside.

Adam Tomczak came from Canada

DOWNEY – Adam Tomczak, a longtime Downey resident and member of the Royal Canadian Air Force during the 1940's, died, Dec. 17. He was 87.

Tomczak was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and was employed by the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railroad. He later worked for Southern Pacific Railroad in Los Angeles.

He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1941-45.

He met his future wife, Doreen, in Bournemouth, England and they were married on Oct. 11, 1945. They lived in Winnipeg for 10 years and moved to California in 1956.

Tomczak belonged to St. Francis Episcopal and St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Doreen; three children,



Brent Tomczak, Evelyn (Matthew) Erickson, and Sandra (Eric) Tomczak-Schmidt; and one grandchild, Griffin Erickson.

He was predeceased by sons John and Gary Tomczak, and a grandson, Sammy Tomczak.

A memorial service was held Sunday at St. Francis Episcopal. His ashes were scattered at sea.

In Loving Memory Dorothy LaVonne Thompson



Dorothy LaVonne Thompson, at the age of 88 passed away on December 20, 2008 from heart failure. She was the loving wife of John C.

Thompson, the mother of Robert Thompson, Eileen Tucker, Joan Martin, Richard Thompson, Becky Romano, John D. Thompson and

David Thompson, who preceded her in death. She was the grandmother to 14 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Dorothy was an active member of Messiah Lutheran Church. She served as a Sunday School Teacher, wrote numerous articles for the church paper, was a Lutheran Women's Missionary League officer, choir member and served in numerous leadership roles. She enjoyed performing in community theater plays. In 1987 she returned to school at Cerritos College and enrolled in Journalism classes. At the age of 67 she was voted Homecoming Queen of Cerritos College. Following that exciting event she appeared on 3 television shows and was featured in several magazines. She was a devoted homemaker who was loved by everyone. Recently she attended exercise classes at the Barbara Riley Center. Dorothy always brought humor and laughter to all those who knew her. Her love and desire to serve the Lord is the legacy she left to all she loved.

A memorial service is planned for Saturday, January 3, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. at Messiah Lutheran Church 10711 Paramount Blvd at 6th and Paramount Blvd., Downey. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to the Dorothy Thompson Memorial fund in care of Messiah Lutheran Church.

POET'S CORNER

Santa's Sleigh

Bright and early Christmas morning
My little girl was happy as can be
I asked her why her eyes were glowing
She sang the cutest little song to me:
"I took a ride on Santa's sleigh
And gee, I had a lotta' fun.
He handed me the reigns along the way
You shoulda' seen those reindeer run.
So high above the clouds and thru the night
Beyond the rain and thunderland
Beneath old Santa's sleigh, there came in sight
A merry Christmas wonderland.
A million little elves were busy as can be
Wrapping all the Christmas toys
And placing them beneath a giant Christmas tree
For Santa's little girls and boys.
My ride on Santa's sleigh, you won't believe
But however strange it seems
A lotta' things can happen Christmas Eve
Especially in Christmas dreams."

-Bill Milburn,
Downey

Alone at Christmas

The Santa cookie jar
A serene three-piece nativity
The only items in his cottage
which spoke of Christmas

Not for him the festooned tree
or colored lights nervously illuminating
man-made snow and flying reindeer

Living alone, he keeps things simple
Last Christmas he cut a branch of dormant fig
arranged oranges, grapes and apples
beneath its boughs
and fed his dog plum pudding.

-Rosalie Sciortino,
Downey

The Truth about Santa

I was walking past a group of kids.
They were bickering over Santa,
Whether he was real or not.
A girl stood up with a smirk on her face.
Acting as if she knew a lot,
She began to say:
"Santa's not real...
I mean, think about it, guys!
If he was real,
Then why would he be eating cookies or Christmas pies
Wouldn't he be watching his weight?
The reindeer would have much trouble;
The gifts would all be late!
The North Pole? Oh, please.
Wouldn't a tropical island be better-
Who wants to freeze?
His white beard's too long-
Why can't those elves cut it?
Looking modern isn't wrong!
Elves making toys without worry or strife?
How cute.
But shouldn't they get a life?
Santa's reindeer in the sky?
Since when can reindeer fly?
And how can he make the trip
Throughout the world in just one flight?
No one can travel at the speed of light!
The crowd of kids was hushed;
Their beliefs began to die.
A moment later, troubled and tense,
The girl shouted to the sky:
"But if Santa is true,
I hope he doesn't put me-
Or maybe even you-
On his naughty list!"

-Rosalie Sciortino,
Downey

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* THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON PG-13 Fri to Tue (11:50, 3:35, 7:10, 10:45; Thu (11:50, 3:35, 7:10, 10:45)

MARLEY & ME PG-13 Fri to Tue (10:35, 1:35, 4:30, 7:30, 10:25; Thu (10:35, 1:35, 4:30, 7:30, 10:25)

THE SPIRIT PG-13 Fri to Tue (11:10, 1:50, 4:45, 7:25, 10:10; Thu (11:10, 1:50, 4:45, 7:25, 10:10)

VALKYRIE PG-13 Fri to Tue (10:45, 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:30; Thu (10:45, 1:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:30)

* SEVEN POUNDS PG-13 Fri to Tue (10:30, 1:30, 4:25, 7:25, 10:25; Thu (10:30, 1:30, 4:25, 7:25, 10:25)

THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX G Fri to Tue (11:30, 1:55, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30)

YES MAN PG-13 Fri to Tue (11:45, 2:30, 5:05, 7:45, 10:20; Thu (11:45, 2:30, 5:05, 7:45, 10:20)

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL PG-13 Fri to Tue (11:15, 2:00, 4:35, 7:15, 9:50; Thu (11:15, 2:00, 4:35, 7:15, 9:50)

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THE TALE OF DESPEREAUX G (10:30 4:00) 9:30

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THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL PG-13 (11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00)

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FOUR CHRISTMASSES PG-13 (11:20 1:35 3:50 6:05 8:20 10:35)

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Lump of coal?

By Eric Pierce

Finicky publishing deadlines mandated that our newspaper go to press before Christmas Day, so I can't share with you what gifts I managed to score from family and friends this year.

Not that I'm expecting much – or anything – in a crummy economy. This is one of those times when you truly should be grateful for anything you receive (cough, like a cushy \$300K job, cough).

Times are tough, but luckily for consumers, retailers recognize this. Earlier this week, I rewarded myself with a brand new touch-screen smartphone. It can access my company e-mail, browse the Internet, download music, gather real-time weather information, take pictures, record video, play full-length movies, provide street-by-street driving directions, and open and edit many of my Microsoft documents.

As I later found out, it can also place and receive calls. An afterthought on phones these days.

The best part is, the phone was 100-percent free. My phone carrier even paid shipping costs and taxes.

So it's not all doom and gloom. Disintegrating economies can mean free phones for us poor people.

There are times when I loathe to crawl out of bed and make the drive to work. (It's seldom but there are times.) But then I remember I have rent to pay and if you're one of the lucky citizens to have a job, clutch on to it with dear life.

Plus, I remember how much I love my job, and how caring, intelligent, and involved the Downey community is. Work is definitely easier when you love your job.

I wish a belated Merry Christmas to our readers, and a happy New Year.

The upside of downsizing

CONTRIBUTED BY DOREEN ORION

In these tough economic times, everyone is talking about the need to downsize, to make sacrifices, but the two are not necessarily one-in-the-same. Doing without can actually lead to getting more. I should know: A few years ago, my husband and I downsized from a 3400 square foot home to a 340 square foot RV.

Here are three ways downsizing has had a positive impact on our lives – and could on yours, as well:

1) When you stop supporting a lifestyle, your life becomes enriched in ways you never imagined. A smaller mortgage and no debt allows more time and energy to pursue the best quality of life possible. Studies have shown that you really can't buy happiness, i.e. people with a lot of material wealth are not generally happier than the rest of us. So, happiness is not about the things we possess, it's about the experiences we have, and the people we make connections to. Imagine if you pared down your expenses to the extent that you weren't stressed about needing to make a certain amount of money. What wonderful experiences and activities could you "spend" that freed-up energy on?

2) When your priorities shift, you'll meet like-minded people who want to relate to you based on who you are rather than the things you have. We've all heard the question workaholics are supposed to ask themselves: On your deathbed, do you really think you'll regret not spending enough time in the office? The question is a valid one for us all. The things in our lives don't give back: People and experiences do. What better proof than a recent study which found that happiness is contagious. In addition, as you make connections to others who feel no need to "keep up with the Joneses," you'll learn from their actions and priorities, thus reinforcing your new-found freedom.

3) When you get off the never-ending treadmill of working to support possessions, you'll notice a certain spark back in your life you may not even have realized was missing. Remember when you were in school or just starting out in your job? Life was stimulating – full of challenges, invigorating. Then, as we started accumulating the spoils of working for a living – all the stuff we claimed as rightfully ours – we settled into a routine. Our lives became rote. It's crucial to keep stretching ourselves by learning new things and having new experiences. Doing so enriches our lives in ways that material possessions never can.

Many people are facing serious financial trouble these days. While there are resources to help consolidate loans, come up with a budget, etc., there is little out there that treats the need to do these things as a path to greater happiness. Rather than looking at downsizing as a sacrifice, try thinking about the freedom and lack of stress you'll enjoy once your finances are in order. Don't look at it as giving up the things that you always thought were important, but rather as discovering those things that really are.

Doreen Orion is the author of *Queen of the Road: The True Tale of 47 States, 22,000 Miles, 200 Shoes, 2 Cats, 1 Poodle, a Husband, and a Bus With a Will of Its Own* (Broadway Books). For more, visit www.QueenOfTheRoadTheBook.com.

Letters to the Editor:

Taxpayer money

Dear Editor:

Mr. Christon doesn't like the films shown in Downey, and doesn't want to cross the city limits to patronize theaters showing films he likes, but few people want to see ("Opportunity for Arts Exists in the Downtown," 12/19/08).

His answer is for Downey taxpayers to subsidize his movies, when the obvious answer is for him to make an investment out of his own funds in a new movie theater. He should risk losing his money instead of putting Downey at risk.

In the same issue of the *Patriot*, the City Council hands out pay raises and 100 percent retiree healthcare as taxpayers are laid off and Downey Ford goes out of business. In the "real economy," we see taxpayers dropping car insurance, cutting back on holiday shopping, taking pay reductions, employers passing healthcare cost to employees, and workers are laid off.

Let us pray for the City Council as it takes on its hedge fund and social welfare functions. Let us also pray that the taxpayers survive these scourges.

— Gordon Lundene,
Downey

Theater downtown

Dear Editor:

I couldn't agree more with Lawrence Christon on Downey needing a theater that would house major studio and independent films that were, as he wrote, of a more mature fare. I would hope that there are enough of us out there who would support such a theater.

Right now the closest theater playing "Frost/Nixon" is in Hollywood – a long drive. The film might possibly open in a theater closer but, as Mr. Christon wrote, it's not the kind of film that would play the Krikorian.

Perhaps Mr. Christon would be kind enough to review these films if they played in Downey for the *Patriot*. He's very good at reviewing; I've read his reviews for the *Los Angeles Times* over the years.

I would also like to see a live drama theater in Downey much like the Long Beach Playhouse. A fellow can dream, can't he?

— David Swain,
Bell Gardens

Gratitude from Assistance League

Dear Editor:

The Assistance League of Downey's annual Christmas Tree Brunch, "Celebrate the Season," was held on Nov. 23 at 10 a.m. at the Long Beach Hilton.

We want to give a special thank you to all that participated and contributed to our yearly fundraiser. This includes our sponsors, underwriters, donors, and hard-working committee members.

Festivities included door prizes, drawings, hand-crafted items, collectibles, homemade treats and a "spirit basket." There was also a silent auction, clothing and jewelry vendors, as well as opportunities to win decorated Christmas trees.

The Citrus College Singers performed their magical Christmas music to the enjoyment of the attendees.

If you are interested in knowing more about our organization, call us at the Second Tyme Around Thrift Shop at (562) 869-0232. Our members that donate their time there will be glad to answer your questions.

— Nancy Bleck,
Public Relations Chairman, Assistance League of Downey

Toy drive a success

Dear Editor:

On Dec. 20-21, the Downey Gigantes, Downey Buzz, along with Calwest.com, hosted a toy drive baseball tournament to raise toys for families in need this holiday season.

The tournament was held in the city of Downey and more than 100 toys were raised. The toys will be donated to the Toys for Tots drive.

A special thanks to Kevin Ellis from the city of Downey Parks and Recreation and his staff for their assistance with the fields this weekend; we couldn't have put on this tournament without all of their assistance.

Thanks also to all the teams that participated, and for all the players that donated toys.

— Downey Gigantes baseball team,
Downey

Taxation without carbonation

CONTRIBUTED BY HANK CARDELLO

A recent *New York Times* op-ed backed a new soda tax advanced by New York Gov. David Paterson as a potential cure for obesity. This proposal would tax sugary beverages to the tune of 18 percent and proponents argue that this approach would lead to reductions in consumption similar to cigarettes.

Let's look more closely at the proposal. Besides raising \$400 million annually for New York State's coffers, the tax as proposed is regressive; that is, it hurts those least able to pay it. Those who can afford it will continue to purchase whatever they wish. Comparing soft drinks to tobacco is a convenient analogy, but enjoying a soft drink, or an ice cream cone, or some French fries in and of itself is not the issue.

The real problem surfaces when these popular foods and beverages morph into Weapons of Mass Consumption (WMCs). By this, I mean 64 ounce Double Big Gulps which deliver over 600 calories or 500 calorie coffee shop muffins or Monster Thickburgers weighing in at 1,420 calories apiece – before you even order the fries. When these steroidal portions collide with a consumer who can't (or perhaps won't) resist their temptation, waistline mayhem results.

Studies show that limiting portions can result in fewer calories consumed. Recent research by the University of Colorado – Denver determined that 120 less calories a day were eaten by those using controlled 100-calorie snack packs versus those eating out of the standard (big) box.

If the government is really sincere about fixing the obesity dilemma, it would focus less on consumers' subsidizing their treasuries and more on how to mobilize the food companies to do the right thing AND make plenty of profits. The government should focus on setting the vision and the goals. The industry, which has the infrastructure and the knowledge, should figure out the logistics.



Culture of greed

Dear Editor:

I am overwhelmed by the culture of greed that exists today. Hundreds of thousands of people are losing their jobs and even being evicted from their homes, and yet our public servants have their hands out again. ("New Council Approves Employees Raises," 12/19/08)

It is unconscionable that anyone lucky enough to have a job at this time would seek a raise, an increase in benefits -- and a shoe and tool allowance yet. Those struggling to feed their families should not be asked to dig deeper so that public employees can enjoy a better lifestyle.

And since when is a deputy assistant something-or-other in Downey worth over \$300,000 a year? The president of the United States only makes about \$400,000 (plus a few other perks). That \$300,000 could well be spent repairing our streets. Have you tried Downey Avenue north of Florence recently? Don't. It'll ruin your car's suspension system.

I don't know what our city employees make, but these are special times and everyone should share the pain. And this sacrifice should start with our U.S. Congress and proceed on down. Congress just granted itself a \$4,700 annual pay raise while railing at the auto industry leaders for lousy management and for making too much money. They're right about the industry management, of course, and I can't see paying laborers over \$70 per hour (including benefits) to tighten bolts either. But what right has House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the other congressional part-time employees to question how business should be run and what anyone is worth? They work full-time only to secure their own re-election, and Pelosi has repeatedly refused to allow bills to be brought to the floor for a vote that would help our economy just to spite President Bush.

And California is no better. In California we have the highest income taxes, the highest state sales tax rate, and the highest gas tax in the western U.S. And yet the clowns in Sacramento are gearing up to add or raise taxes on everything imaginable while they sit on their thumbs and draw their fat salaries.

California is about to go down the drain due to our unrestrained spending, and we are driving business out of California with our high tax rates. But we aren't smart enough to allow oil exploration off our coasts which would be a big help to our economy and wouldn't cost us a dime. Somebody is getting paid off.

It's all about greed and self-interest. It seems the concept of working for the common good that made this country great is gone. And that's s -- Don Niemand,
Downey

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

The Downey Patriot

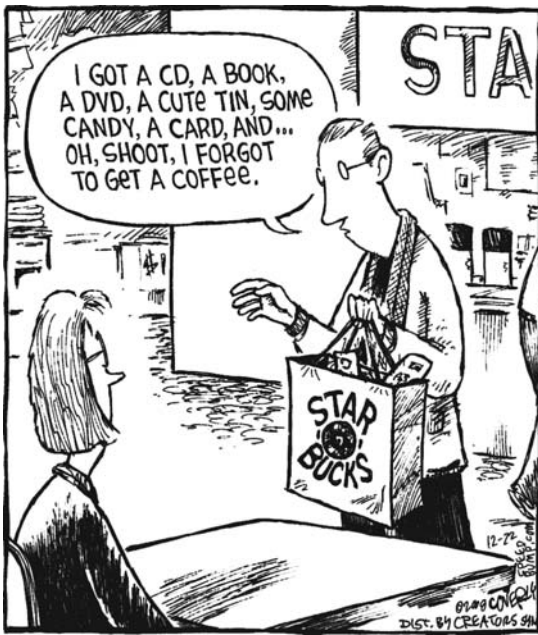
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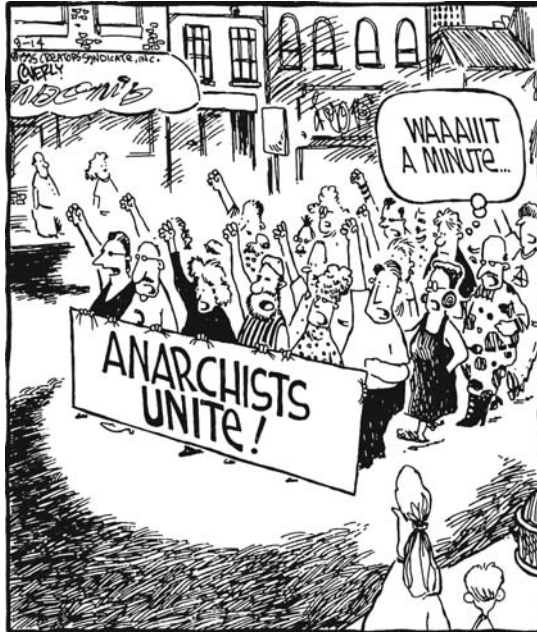
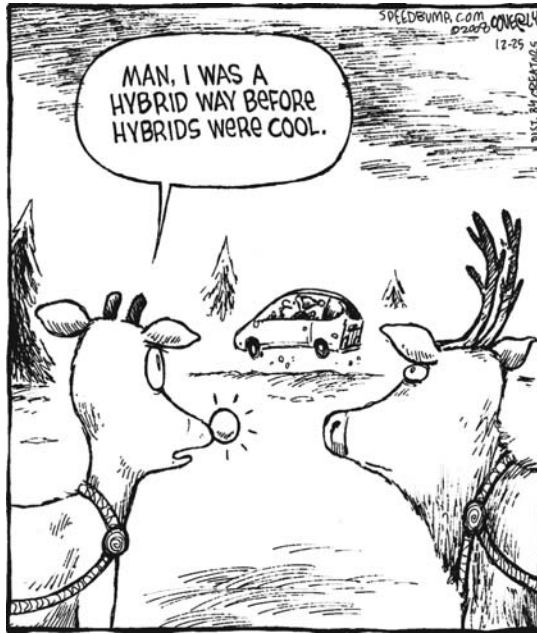
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SPEED BUMP



DAVE COVERLY



Downey Community Calendar

Events For December/January

- Fri. Dec. 26: **Hanukkah celebration dinner**, Temple Ner Tamid, 6 p.m.
- Tues. Dec. 30: **Blood drive**, Downey Regional Medical Center, 7 a.m.
- Tues. Dec. 30: **Fundraiser for Downey Gigantes**, Chili's, 4 p.m.
- Thurs. Jan. 1: **Tournament of Roses Parade**, Pasadena, 8 a.m.

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.
- 2nd and 4th Tues., 7:30 a.m.: **Chamber "Rise&Shine" Networkers**, 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.
- 1st & 3rd Weds., 7:00 p.m.: **After-Care Post Cancer Therapy Group**, for information call 923-4800.
- 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, for info. call Gina 869-5213 or Valerie 420-2972.
- 3rd Weds., 6 p.m. - **American Business Women's Association**, Rio Hondo Country Club, Call Barbara Carlson 863-2192.
- 4th Weds., 12:00 noon: **Retired Federal Employees**, at **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**, 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 Sambis, 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.

Saturdays

- 9 a.m.: **Farmers Market**, Second Street at New Avenue, for information call (562) 904-7246.

Sundays

- 3rd Sun. Odd # Months 1:30 p.m.: **Aerospace Legacy Foundation**, at First Baptist Church Room 120.

On This Day...

Dec. 26, 1799: Col. Henry Lee eulogizes President George Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Washington had died two weeks earlier of pneumonia.

1919: Babe Ruth, one of the greatest baseball players to play the game, is sold by the Boston Red Sox to the New York Yankees for \$100,000. Ruth would lead the Yankees to seven World Series titles.

1972: Harry S. Truman, the 33rd president of the United States, dies at age 88.

1996: JonBenet Ramsey, 6, is found strangled in the basement of her family's Boulder, Colo. home.

2004: A powerful tsunami leaves more than 216,000 people dead or missing in southern Asia.

2006: Gerald R. Ford, the 38th president of the United States, dies at age 93.

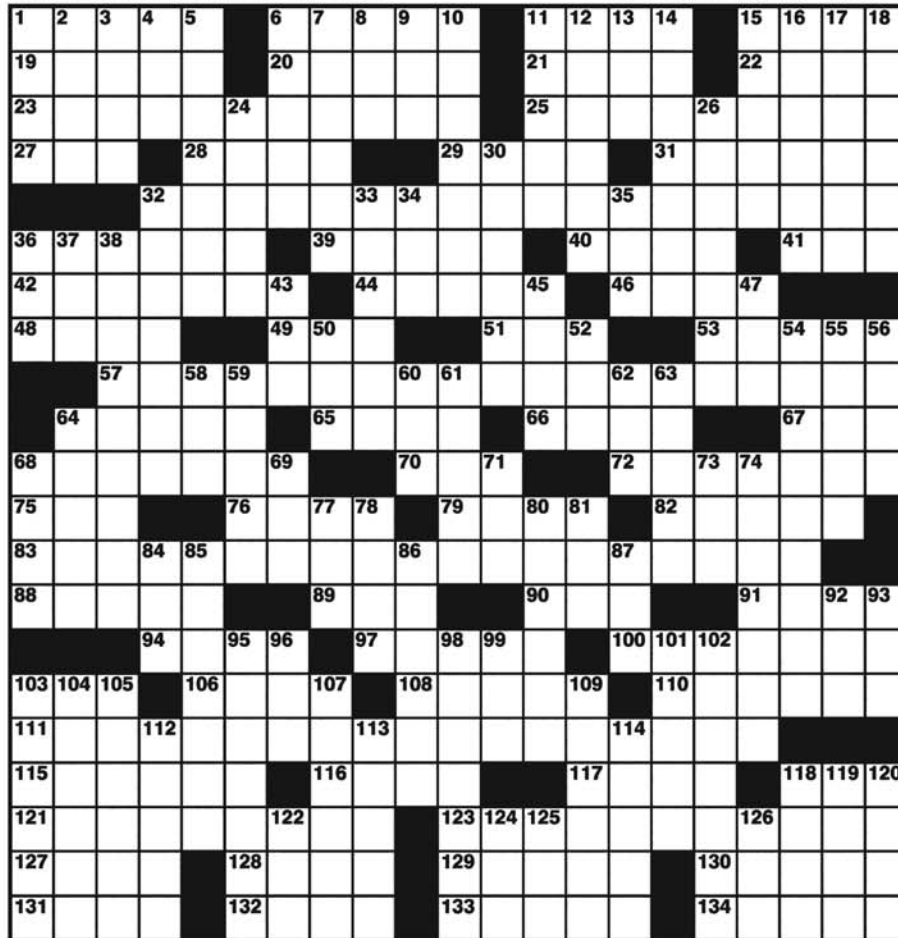
THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

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ALL IN FAVOR: For positive thinkers
by Nancy Salomon

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| ACROSS | 82 Like Vikings | 8 ___Magnon man |
| 1 Former international airline | 83 Create one contract clause? | 9 Dadaism leader |
| 6 Composers' org. | 88 Diarist Nin | 10 Bribes grease |
| 11 Volvo alternative | 89 High-speed Internet inits. | 11 Popeye creator |
| 15 Common rhyme scheme | 90 Propel a rowboat | 12 Of a heart chamber "___ we there yet?" |
| 19 Wine's nose | 91 Rec rooms | 14 Where things are buzzing |
| 20 Land in Rome | 94 Round-ending signal | 15 Top Trappist |
| 21 To be, in Toulon | 97 Game-show announcer Johnny | 16 Add muscle to |
| 22 Gymnastics coach Károlyi | 100 <i>Ten Commandments</i> villain | 17 Actress Danes |
| 23 Forged artwork? | 103 Verb ending | 18 Playful prattle |
| 25 Versatile veggie | 106 Cyborg movie prefix | 24 At large |
| 27 Request, with "for" | 108 Plains natives | 26 "Sorry, that's impossible!" |
| 28 Talk up | 110 They're larger than octaves | 30 Push and shove |
| 29 City near Santa Barbara | 111 Dissent belittlement? | 32 Blocks |
| 31 Take a hike | 115 Street-light compound | 33 Pop singer Jon |
| 32 Pop the question on camera? | 116 "Piece of cake!" | 34 Fair-hiring letters |
| 36 Eisenhower cabinet member | 117 Rap online | 35 One to hang out with |
| 39 Coral communities | 118 Books expert: Abbr. | 36 Two-out actions: Abbr. |
| 40 Kilaua flow | 121 Late-day prayers | 37 Coffeehouse device |
| 41 In accordance with | 123 Got stuff for sandwiches? | 38 Pelican State |
| 42 More puffed up | 127 Offend the nose | 39 Carnival site |
| 44 Goes for | 128 College-course division | 45 Absorbs, with "up" |
| 46 Eye-piece | 129 Officiated on the court | 47 Harden |
| 48 Comfy-cozy | 130 Actress Witherspoon | 50 BP takers |
| 49 Roth plan | 131 Credit-application data: Abbr. | 52 Good buddy |
| 51 Soft toss | 132 Some bills | 54 Chinese soup ingredient |
| 53 Messing of <i>Will and Grace</i> | 133 Bygone Russian rulers | 55 Blush makeup |
| 57 Endorsement of an advancement? | 134 Canon competitor | 56 Prince Harry's aunt |
| 64 Garden-variety | | 58 "The Gold Bug" monogram |
| 65 Alias of H.H. Munro | | 59 Like crystal |
| 66 New aviator's hurdle | | 60 Bout ender |
| 67 Compete in a meet | DOWN | 61 Approach, as for a loan |
| 70 Itty-bitty bit | 1 Hemingway sobriquet | 62 Slangy suffix |
| 72 Wagering loc. | 2 SFO landings | 63 Early times |
| 72 One-time ABC honcho | 3 Sheltered spot | 64 Group of locals |
| 75 ___mater (brain cover) | 4 Big name in bowling | 68 Pet-rights org. |
| 76 Verdi opera | 5 Restaurant VIP | 69 Draw |
| 79 Bear in the air | 6 Enjoyed to the max | 71 "Turn up the heat!" |
| | 7 Pie-chart part | 73 Law, in Lille |

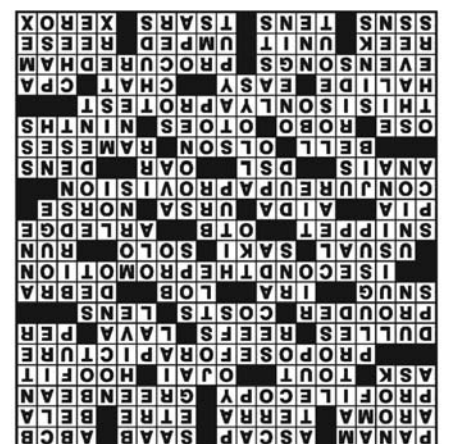
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|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 74 Tending to wear down | 95 Draw the short straw | 109 World Cup sport |
| 77 Fizzled firecracker | 96 Corp. takeover | 112 Drops down |
| 78 Lhasa ___ | 98 Don't move | 113 Wears well |
| 80 Cornhusker archrival | 99 Alley follower | 114 Heavy sounds |
| 81 Actress Gardner | 101 Keep ___ to the ground | 118 Moonstruck star |
| 84 Triangular sail | 102 Unidentified guy | 119 ___doble (Latin dance) |
| 85 Log-in info | 103 Catchall category | 120 NYSE alternative |
| 86 Metallic mixtures | 104 Cuts closely | 122 Madrid-to-London dir. |
| 87 Discount-rack abbr. | 105 Character actress | 124 Apartment ad abbr. |
| 92 Bk. after Ezra | 107 Heckart | 125 WWII rationing agcy. |
| 93 Conscriptation agcy. | 107 Pushkin hero | 126 Poor grade |

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.

Romanian-born gymnastics coach BELA KAROLYI (22 Across) has including Mary Lou Retton and Nadia Comaneci. Eisenhower secretary of state John Foster DULLES (36 Across) was the grandson of John Foster, secretary of state under Benjamin Harrison. Bowling-lane manufacturer AMF Davidson line of motorcycles.



Headaches make people unhappy, survey finds

CHICAGO – A recent online survey conducted by the National Headache Foundation (NHF) further confirms the connection between headaches and depression.

The survey found that 42 percent of respondents believe their headaches and depression are linked and 53 percent believe that their headaches came before the developed depression. The correlation between headache and depression has been documented extensively; however, researchers have yet to find evidence as to how these conditions are related.

According to the survey, 80 percent of respondents indicated they suffer from symptoms of depression but only 52 percent have been diagnosed by their healthcare provider with the condition.

“These statistics are similar to my own research in that the incidence of migraine and depression may be twice as high as previously believed,” said Dr. Gary E. Ruoff of the Westside Family Medical Center in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Nearly half of respondents reported never receiving medical treatment for depression. The survey showed that 71 percent of respondents feel more depressed when suffering from a headache and 92 percent would consider life happier if they no longer suffered from headaches.

Experts say this unhappiness can be avoided.

“The identification and treatment of depression during its earliest stages may slow the progression of both migraine and depression into higher levels of severity, and may make both easier to treat,” Ruoff said.

The most common symptoms of depression were cited as energy loss (71 percent), difficulty sleeping or oversleeping (75 percent), loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyable (68 percent), sad mood and difficulty in concentrating (67 percent).

Gum Disease

Exchanging kisses underneath the mistletoe may leave holiday revelers with more than just friendship and goodwill tidings. Passionate partygoers may swap up to 500 different species of germs, including those that cause gum disease, warns the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), an organization of general dentists dedicated to continuing education.

“With just one kiss, this infection can be passed between couples and even to children,” said AGD spokesperson, Lawrence Bailey, DDS, FAGD.

Gum disease, a chronic inflammation and infection of the gums and surrounding tissues, is the major cause of about 70 percent of adult tooth loss, affects three out of four persons at some point in their life and is easily transmissible through mouth-to-mouth contact.

In recent years, researchers have found a possible connection between gum disease and coronary vascular disease, which can place people at risk for heart attacks and strokes. In individuals with diabetes, gum disease is associated with poor control of insulin levels. Pregnant women also need to be careful; gum disease can place pregnant women at risk for having low-birth weight babies.

Although the pagan significance of kissing under the mistletoe has long been forgotten, the custom remains a desirable decoration and is still found in many countries. Kisses are exchanged under this plant at any time during the holiday season.

“In the spirit of the season, folks with gum disease should refrain from kissing under the mistletoe,” said Bailey. “However, if there are some concerns that gum disease may already be present, a visit to your general dentist is important to detect the disease early and treat it in its early stages.”

Are you a candidate for gum disease?

Check for the following signs, advised Bailey:

- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Bleeding while brushing or flossing
- Gums that pull away from teeth
- Loose or separating teeth
- Persistent bad breath
- Change in the way teeth fit together when the patient bites
- Change in the fit of partial dentures

About the AGD

The AGD is a professional association of more than 35,000 general dentists dedicated to staying up-to-date in the profession through continuing education. Founded in 1952, the AGD has grown to become the world's second largest dental association, which is the only association that exclusively represents the needs and interests of general dentists.

Focus on the importance of eyewear

Whether it's adjusting the ingredients in traditional holiday recipes, exercising more, or simply balancing the stress of work and family life, many people will attempt to live healthier, more active lifestyles as part of their New Year's resolutions. A key aspect of healthy lifestyles that Hispanics often overlook is the importance of proper eyecare.

Dr. Madeline Romeu, O.D., F.A.A.O., offers tips for making healthy New Year's resolutions a reality that can be adapted to meet any lifestyle.

“Caring for your eyes means taking a holistic approach to health. It's essential to consider everything you do that contributes to a healthy lifestyle, from eating vitamin A rich foods like bananas, beans, fish, carrots and tomatoes, to including exercise in your daily routine and wearing proper eyewear to protect your eyes while outdoors,” said Romeu. “It's crucial to visit your eyecare professional for complete regular eye exams and to know as much as possible about your family medical history, especially if there is a record of diabetes or high blood

pressure in your family, as both conditions could impact visual health.”

Exercise and activity are fundamental to overall health and wellness. As people work towards achieving a healthier lifestyle, they are often drawn outdoors for a variety of activities. While outdoor activity is enjoyable, the increased amount of time spent in the sun -- whether you're playing soccer, barbecuing or simply taking a walk -- is not only a danger to the skin, but also poses a significant threat to the eyes.

Simple steps can be taken to stay protected from the sun and its harmful UV rays. Wearing sunscreen while outdoors and selecting proper everyday eyewear, such as Transitions lenses, will help protect the eyes from the sun's UV rays and will help preserve lifelong healthy sight and wellness.

For more information about healthy sight and wellness and tips for choosing proper eyewear, visit www.Transitions.com or www.EyeglassGuide.com.

Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer



nail beds can be a sign of heart disease. A thickened and yellow appearance is easily recognizable as a fungal infection. Beau's Line is a horizontal groove in your nails, which may be a sign of diabetes, circulatory ailments, malnutrition or severe dieting, or high fevers. A single groove may represent a single traumatic event or injury to the nail. (Refer to WebMD.com for more details.)

Do doctors actually diagnose serious diseases by looking at the nails? In reality, a patient will present with other more significant or dramatic symptoms of a disease well before any nail changes occur. For instance, a patient with emphysema will complain of shortness of breath long before the nails start to club. Also, classic nail changes don't necessarily occur to everyone with a similar disease, and not everyone with a particular nail change has the associated disease. In other words, the nail changes are not consistent or predictive of a particular disease. (If your nails look reddish, a classic sign of heart disease, first check to see if your nail polish has been fully removed!) Nonetheless, it is important to keep an eye on your nails, both to keep them healthy and because they can

be an indication of changes in our bodies.

When should you see your doctor? When healthy fingernails or toenails begin to change color or texture, have irregular growth, pitting or holes, or dark brown streaks, you will want to seek help.

Parents can attest to the frustration of watching their children biting their nails 24/7. What we all want (or do...) say is that they will get their fill of bug eggs by consuming their nails! What is the reality? Fingernails are largely made up of the protein alpha-keratin, as are hair, wool and rhinoceros horn. Still, the nutritional benefits are pretty low.

How about the negatives? Constant chewing on hard nails will certainly damage tooth enamel. As we're all aware, the area under the fingernail is one of the dirtiest in our body. This is an excellent way to get sick by introducing unclean fingers and nail beds into your mouth. Compulsive nail biters also bite the surrounding skin and cuticle, breaking down skin barriers and transferring opportunistic microbes and viruses into the mouth. It is outside the scope of this article to explain the reasons why people bite their fingernails; it is clear that more healthful alternatives need to be found

to cure someone of this habit.

How can you keep your nails healthy and free of infection?

- Keep your nails clean and dry
 - Avoid nail biting
 - If necessary, apply moisturizer to your nails and cuticles on a daily basis. Creams with urea, phospholipids, or lactic acid can help prevent cracking
 - File your nails in one direction and round the tips slightly
 - Don't remove the cuticles or clean too deeply under your nails
 - Don't dig out ingrown toenails.
- See a dermatologist or podiatrist if they become a problem
- Avoid nail polish removers that contain acetone or formaldehyde
 - Bring your own instruments if you get frequent manicures or pedicures
 - If you have artificial nails, check regularly for green discoloration, a sign of bacterial infection
 - Consult your doctor if you have any concerns

Happy New Year!

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

Do fingernails give clues about your health? Do you see differences in color or texture, bumps, ridges, or white spots? Is your child -- or are you -- a nail biter?

The appearance of your nails can be an indication of what is happening within your body. “Clubbing”, a painless buildup of tissue around the ends of the fingers, is a classic finding in chronic lung disease. Pale nail beds are seen in a person with significant anemia (low red blood cell count) because there is not enough blood circulating to that part of the body. Dark lines beneath the nail may represent melanoma, a skin cancer. White nails are often seen in chronic liver disease. Red

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Merry Christmas to sports in Downey

By SCOTT COBOS, STAFF WRITER

With Christmas over now, all the good little boys and girls had a visit from Santa Claus who left them fun little toys and trinkets to provide them endless hours of entertainment.

Some boys will get a bicycle or a video game system, some girls will get dolls and stuffed animals.

Christmas came early though for the city and their sports programs as there hasn't been a let down in any area.

This year, Warren and Downey football led successful campaigns in the San Gabriel Valley League. The Bears claimed their first league championship in years and managed to wrangle their way to a second round game before being eliminated.

The Vikings at first looked dim but upset Warren, then beat Gahr to get them in the playoffs.

Warren and Downey girls volleyball programs continue to roll with the Vikings' head coach winning one of the most prestigious awards from CIF this year.

Both high school water polo teams had dominating seasons this year as well with Downey edging out Warren for a league title.

All the youth sports programs continue to thrive as well with travel baseball and basketball teams popping up all over the place, winning tournaments, leagues and other miscellaneous scrimmages against quality opponents.

Christmas definitely came early for all of these programs in Downey and the outlook looks good with baseball and track and field in the Spring for the high schools.

And while it may be off topic to mention, all the sports writers in America is about to receive a Christmas present on Sunday.

It's been a dream of everyone writing columns on a daily or weekly basis to see a professional team run the table backwards. Jim Rome fantasizes of it, ESPN can't stop talking about it, the Los Angeles Times' Bill Plaschke is holding his breath waiting for it to happen.

The Detroit Lions are currently 0-15, the worst start to a professional football season ever recorded. When they lose on Sunday, they will go down in history as the only professional sports team to lose every single game they played in a season.

It may be bad for the team, but it will be nothing short of a succulent feast for the sports writer. Merry Christmas!



Ashley Boyd will play softball at California Baptist University after two years at Cypress College. Boyd graduated from Downey High School in 2004.

Boyd taking game to next level

DOWNEY – Ashley Boyd, a 2004 graduate of Downey High School, has received a scholarship to play softball at California Baptist University.

Boyd graduated from Downey in 2004, when she was All-CIF 1st Team and San Gabriel Valley League Co-MVP her senior year. After two years of work, she went back to school at Cypress College and was asked to play softball again by Coach Brad Pickler.

Her freshman year she was named an All-Southern California player, received All-American honors, was selected as a member of the All-Orange Empire Conference team, and she also batted .643 in the state tournament.

As a sophomore, Boyd was named an All-State player and again earned All-American honors, in addition to being selected MVP of the Orange Empire Conference. She was also inducted into the Cypress College Hall of Fame for athletes.

"Ashley is the perfect example of never giving up to achieve her long-time goals, receiving a scholarship and getting an education," said her father, Mike Boyd.

Tennis classes begin Jan. 6 at Independence Park

DOWNEY – The next session of community tennis classes begins Jan. 6 at Independence Park. Sponsored by the city of Downey Community Services Department, the classes are led by tennis professional Fabian Grassini and his staff.

Adult classes will be held Wednesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. and is for beginning and intermediate students. Cost of the 8-week course is \$95.

Classes for children ages 4-7 and 8-14 will be held Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Beginners class is from 4 to 5 p.m. and intermediate class from 5 to 6 p.m. Cost is also \$95.

The USTA Junior Team Tennis Program will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m. for children ages 6-18 who want to train together and compete against other junior teams throughout Southern California. The program is \$80 for four weeks (eight classes).

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

Lacrosse league holding sign-ups

DOWNEY – A lacrosse league for middle school students ages 12-14 is holding sign-ups tomorrow and Jan. 3 at the Downey High School football field from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The new league is designed to develop lacrosse skills. Games will be played against neighboring cities' youth programs.

For more information, call Coach Gabe Carillo at (562) 922-2377.

Baseball fundraiser Tuesday

DOWNEY – The Downey Gigantes travel baseball team has partnered with Chili's restaurant to host a fundraiser Tuesday to raise money so the team can travel to participate in the MLK Tournament in Arizona.

Anybody who eats at Chili's at Downey Landing on Tuesday between 4 p.m. and closing and shows a team flier will have 10 percent of their order donated to the team.

The flier is available online at www.leaguelineup.com/downeygigantes.

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• **"Lima Nights"** by Marie Arana. Themes of love, prejudice and terror are combined in this tale set in Peru in 1986 during the reign of the Shining Path Communists.

• **"The Little Giant of Aberdeen County"** by Tiffany Baker. After their parents die, Truly, a girl who suffers from an illness that causes her to grow abnormally, and her beautiful sister Serena must learn to navigate the world alone.

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Los Padrinos Juvenile Detention Center partnered with Toys for Tots this year to provide Christmas gifts for needy Los Angeles County families. Photo by Mary Forney



Marines from Pico Rivera collected and delivered 2,800 gifts for Santa Claus to dispense to children attending the Holiday Festival at Los Padrinos Juvenile Detention Center on Dec. 20. Photo courtesy Jim Marshall

Los Padrinos hosts Christmas bash

BY MARY FORNEY,
STAFF WRITER

DOWNEY — Michael Romero from Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall gave Los Angeles County families a special gift on Dec. 20 — the gift of resources.

Thinking of ways he could help strengthen families financially and lower their stress levels, Romero came up with the idea of hosting a community Christmas party last year — but not a party in the traditional sense. Romero wanted to host a party that would provide a place where families could easily sign up for public services that could help them.

For the second year, more than 1,000 families showed up on the grounds of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall to sign up for food stamps, low-cost or free counseling services, medical and dental care, job-training, after school programs, and gifts from Toys for Tots.

Those who were parents of the children living in juvenile hall were quietly escorted inside for a visit.

"I tell the parents I have something in common with

them," Romero said. "They don't want their child coming back here and neither do I."

Combining his previous experience in the health care profession with his career working for the county probation department's family resource center, Romero believes prevention is the key to good family health.

"Assessing a family's needs so their child won't end up here, or return here, can be difficult. We want to give personal service so the family members can get what they need — not just a 'see you later' attitude," Romero said. "Many times, parents don't know where to go for help so kids are returned back to the same problems — and they end up coming back here or worse."

The families were required to fill out a survey before entering the holiday extravaganza to determine what their needs are — from food stamps and health issues to help finding work. County employees reviewing the surveys personally escorted the families to the booths which could help fill their need.

Romero and the County of Los Angeles Probation

Department first tried out the community Christmas party idea last year, with 20 community partnerships offering to volunteer. This year, 50 local organizations came forward to offer assistance to the Christmas party guests.

"Our partners want to be here because all of us have the same goal — families — and how to keep them united and loved," Romero said. "The economy is bad and it can only get worse so we are providing sources for the kids and the parents so they aren't so stressed out."

Follow-ups will be done on the surveys turned in to see how the families are doing.

"We have always worked hard for the juveniles in our center, but there's been a disconnect with the organizations," said Daniel Aceves, who is the assistant superintendent of the Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall Detention Services Bureau.

"We don't want to lose our investment in the minors that are released from here and see them returned to a lost environment. In the corners of where you think there is hopelessness — you are going to find probation officers."



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