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VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

DOWNEY — Twenty-three Downey civic leaders were celebrated Wednesday for their volunteer contributions to the local community.

Honorees were chosen by their respective organizations.

The awards ceremony, hosted annually by the Downey Coordinating Council, was held this year at the Woman's Club of Downey.

Below is a list of honorees and a brief bio as provided by the Coordinating Council.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF DOWNEY

CATHY BALLON-GODINEZ: Cathy is a Warren High School Graduate (Class of '91) and proudly adds that she started DUSD in kindergarten, as did her two children, Yazmin (DHS 2010) and Devin (WHS 2020). For the past six years Cathy has served as an Assisten Coordinator. The Assisteen support Assistance League community programs such as Operation Hug-A-Bear, Operation School Bell, Christmas Distribution, upkeep of Casa de Parley Johnson, working the Second Tyme Around Shoppe, Story Festival, Chapter Fundraisers, Glamour Gowns, and Legacy for Learning. Cathy also gives her time and talent to Downey Razorbacks, Greater LA Homeless Count, PTA, Northwest Downey Little League, AYSO, Gangs Out of Downey, and DJAA.

BSA SCOUTING, PIO PICO DISTRICT

DAN FIJAN: Dan Fijan, a volunteer in BSA Scouting for 20 years, has coached over 50 boys and girls to the Eagle Scout rank, the highest rank in Scouts BSA program. Dan serves as the Eagle Board of Review Chairman for Pio Pico District. As Assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 438, Dan helped the Troop grow from 14 scouts to over 60 members. In 2019, he earned the District Award of Merit for our local Pio Pico District. In 2022, Dan was recognized with the Silver Beaver Award, the highest award given to volunteers by Greater Los Angeles Scouting. Dan and his wife Charlyn have three children, a BSA Eagle Scout, and a GSA Gold Award.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S GUILD OLPH CHURCH

LINDA MALME: Linda cherishes her volunteer work with Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church Tuna Sandwich Program, which has provided 800 sandwiches per week to the homeless in downtown Los Angeles for over 35 years. For five years, Linda and Glenn, along with other volunteers, made 400 tuna sandwiches in the OLPH school kitchen every Tuesday. When the program closed due to Covid, Linda arranged with five other churches and the Franciscan Sisters in Boyle Heights to continue sharing weekly bread donations. This winter, Linda collaborated with the Los Angeles Homeless Shelter Authority (LAHSA) by organizing OLPH Guild members to donate food and clothing for families displaced by the floods. Linda believes "Service is love in action."

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY

SAL CERVANTES: Sal and his wife Rosa have enjoyed living in Downey for over thirty years. They rebuilt their modest home and raised their three children, enrolling them in many sports and City programs. They want you and your children to enjoy the same or better lifestyle. For this reason Sal is passionate about helping reverse the damage we are inflicting on Mother Earth by burning too much coal, oil, and gas. Currently, alternate forms of energy are not sufficient or readily available. Through Citizens Climate Lobby, we share, with elected officials and our communities, expert information to help us all make difficult but good decisions to guarantee our kids a sustainable future.

DOWNEY ARTS COALITION

PAT GIL: Pat is a founding member of the Downey Arts Coalition, an organization committed to supporting artists and their work across all genres. Since 2012 Pat has worked tirelessly not only in ongoing leadership roles, fundraising, and arts advocacy, but also with the hands-on planning and execution of events serving the Downey community. Highlights of her involvement include: two productions of a Broadway play at the Columbia Space Center, as well as smaller theater events, the free Glennfest Movie Festival, and the unique art exhibits at every concert by the Downey Symphony Orchestra and the yearly Dia de los Muertos celebration.

DOWNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SHEILA TETANGCO-BARTOLONE: Sheila is being honored by the Downey Chamber for her many years of leadership. As a Board Member, Sheila has created events, increased membership, and mentored new business owners as they became involved in Chamber activities. The Annual Christmas Parade has benefited from Sheila's hard work in securing sponsorships, volunteering, as well as organizing entries. As President and as Immediate Past President, Sheila has chaired many committees, but her most important work has been with the Chamber's Ambassadors. This important gathering of volunteers is the backbone of the Chamber.

DOWNEY CITY LIBRARY

DAISY ONGAY: Daisy Ongay is a junior at Bell High School, and has given time to the Downey City Library for a year. Daisy is interested in pursuing a career as an architect and is a member of ACE, the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering Club at her school. She belongs to the Beautification Club and is working with a donor to add comfortable green spaces around the campus. Daisy has designed many amazing crafts for the Downey City Library children's programs. She also volunteers at our special events. Daisy cheerfully accepts all tasks assigned to her. Daisy recently started a book club at her school.

DOWNEY CONSERVANCY

ANNIE ROJES: Annie Rojas has lived in Downey since 2011. During those years, she has volunteered for the Assistance League, Downey Neighborhood Watch, and the Downey Conservancy. She joined the Downey Conservancy board in 2018 and enjoys helping in its efforts to preserve the beautiful and historically significant properties and neighborhoods in Downey. She has helped organize home tours and other events and currently serves as the secretary. Annie credits close friend and neighbor, the late Harold Tsekleis, for being the first to open her eyes to the volunteer opportunities Downey has to offer and inviting her to be part of the Conservancy.

DOWNEY COORDINATING COUNCIL

LOIS BUCHANAN: The Coordinating Council was formed in 1953 as an Information Committee before Downey was incorporated. Lois joined in 1965, representing the Downey Unified School District. Forty-two years ago Lois took over chairing the Volunteer Recognition Banquet. These gracious dinners with musical entertainment are one of her trademarks. The scrolls of appreciation from public officials are Lois's idea. In 2020



Photo by Alex Dominguez

Lois was named California Woman of the Year for the 58th District by former Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia. Lois is a great-grandmother and cancer survivor. Her tireless work is emblematic of the important role that volunteers play in a vibrant, healthy community.

DOWNEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

ROGER MILLER: Roger grew up in Downey, attending Roger Casier Elementary School, St. Mark's, Griffiths Middle School, and graduating from Warren High School in 1973. About twenty years ago Roger moved to Garden Grove, but through his interest in Downey history, Roger says he is now more involved and connected with his hometown than ever. Roger recounts that his attendance at his 45th high school reunion sparked his deep dive into Downey history. He joined the Historical Society and is now an active board member. He is passionate about his project of making a video of Downey history and hopes to make it a resource for Downey students.

DOWNEY LOS AMIGOS KIWANIS

CLAUDE BILODEAU: Claude Bilodeau has been a member of the Downey Los Amigos Kiwanis Club for nearly six years. Three years ago, he served as President during the COVID pandemic and shutdown. Claude stated that giving back to the community was his goal and he feels that being a part of Kiwanis is the best way to do that. His favorite activities include the annual Christmas Shopping Program, Breakfast with Santa, and the Kiwanis Scholarship Program. Currently Claude is in charge of the Annual Kiwanis Auto Show which is raising funds to build the new Downey YMCA. The event has raised nearly \$100,000 to date.

DOWNEY PATRIOT

ALEXIS GIVENS: Education has always come first for Alexis Givens, followed closely by volunteerism. She is a straight A student at Doty Middle School and a member of the Femineers, a campus club for girls interested in STEM. She donates her time to Rio San Gabriel Elementary as a Doty Helper. Alexis was crowned Little Miss Downey in 2020 and today serves as Junior Miss Downey, representing Downey with grace and enthusiasm at community functions. And who says kids don't read newspapers? Alexis is an enthusiastic supporter of the Downey Patriot, and helps deliver newspapers during her summer break.

DOWNEY ROSE FLOAT ASSOCIATION

DANIELLE STOREY: Danielle Storey has been involved with the Downey Rose Float for more than twenty years. She has chaired fundraisers such as Parade of Winners and Flower the Float, and has helped on many committees. Danielle has served on the Board and is the Floral Chairperson. Both she and her husband were born in Downey, and now their three boys are also involved with helping the Rose Float Association. Danielle works at Downey High as a CTE teacher, helping students learn the necessary skills for employment and life after high school. She recently opened an on-campus business with the students so they could learn job skills.

DOWNEY SYMPHONIC SOCIETY

ERIC PIERCE: Eric is always there when you need him. In addition to being vice-president of the Downey Symphonic Society and chair of the Marketing Committee, Eric has also acted as a staff photographer, taking pictures at every concert and the Downey Holiday parade. This past year, he assisted the treasurer with finances and the president with grant applications. Even before joining the board of directors, Eric ensured the symphony received ongoing coverage and publicity in the Downey Patriot. Whatever the task is, Eric's answer is always, "Yes, it would be my pleasure to help."

DOWNEY TOASTMASTERS CLUB 587

MONICA GROSS: After retiring from a career in the health professions, Monica joined Toastmasters to stay active in her community by helping others improve their communication and leadership skills. During her four years in Toastmasters, she has been Club Treasurer, has represented the club in the area speech contest and is currently VP of membership, thereby assuring the continuity and smooth functioning of the club. Monica enjoys gardening and is a certified master gardener. She grows much of her own food and sells extra crops as a business. She also loves swimming and is an avid reader. About her retirement, Monica has said "I feel like a kid again, I can do anything I want to do without adult supervision!"

EXCHANGE CLUB FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

MIKE IACOVITTI: Mike is a lifelong Downey resident who has been volunteering as an Exchange Club Family Support Center board member since 2006. However, he was donating his time for many, many years prior to that. Mike has been serving as the Exchange Club Center Board president for over ten years. Additionally he serves as a key member on the Center's finance committee. Mike, along with his wife and fellow board

member Wanda, has supported the Center in many ways: fundraising, hosting the Center's client families at special events, donating, assisting with projects around the Center's facility, and so much more. The Exchange Club Center is fortunate to have such a dedicated and highly valued volunteer.

FOODHELP

TERESA AVILA: Teresa has been with the program for five years and has become someone we can always count on to follow through with any task asked of her. Whether it comes to sorting vegetables or preparing dry groceries, she is always willing to help. Teresa even has her own section on Saturday for distribution of miscellaneous items. She interacts with the approximately 250 families who select available items such as chips, cereal, and drinks, along with other grocery and non-grocery items. Teresa brings her two granddaughters to help too.

FRIENDS OF THE DOWNEY CITY LIBRARY

VIRGINIA YOSHIYAMA: Virginia's commitment and work extends well beyond her numerous and wide-ranging duties as our president. She wears many hats and has been an extraordinary and tireless volunteer for well over a decade, bringing a key essence to our organization with her dedication, dependability, and creative ideas. As a retired teacher and former business owner, Virginia's experience and talents are profound, and thus her work continues to have a wide-ranging impact on our community.

GANGS OUT OF DOWNEY

RONNIE FERNANDEZ: Ronnie is First Vice President of GOOD and has shown a willingness to jump in and tackle whatever needs to be done. Ronnie has worked within the social service realm for many years, beginning as a student at East LA Community College, and continuing while receiving his bachelors at Cal State Dominguez Hills and his masters at USC. He and his wife Joanna have two daughters at Carpenter Elementary School. Collaboration with Downey groups, such as DCC, weighed heavily in their decision to make our city their home. Ronnie, a therapist, recently became the Director of the 10/20 Club, and is now focusing on mental health for struggling middle and high school students.

PTA H.E.L.P.S.

MARTHA SODETANI: Martha is a dedicated volunteer who has touched the lives of many. As a mother of six, she has been actively involved with the PTA for many years and served on the DUSD school board. She is also an active member of the Assistance League, Gangs Out of Downey, and the Downey Coordinating Council. A wonderful nugget of wisdom she shares is, "There may be political things going on in the background at times, but keep your focus on the mission at hand and the people you are assisting."

ROTARY CLUB OF DOWNEY

GREG WELCH: Greg, a past president of the Rotary Club of Downey, created the Rotary Interact Program for Columbus High School, and introduced our Adopt-A-Grandparent Program. Greg appeared as Santa Claus, a right jolly old elf, for our Children's Christmas Luncheon. At a Rotary District picnic at Seaside Lagoon, he paddled the Downey cardboard boat that beat all comers, and he will be representing Rotary on the Memorial Day Run For The Wall, a motorcycle rally from California to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. Personally and professionally, Greg exemplifies Rotary's motto, "Service above self."

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF DOWNEY

BLANCA ROCHIN: Blanca has been a member of Soroptimist International of Downey for 14 years. She has served as a two-time past president for our organization. Through the years Blanca has raised over \$50,000 in grants that we gave out in scholarships to our high school and adult school students. We are extremely proud of the work she does in her service hours and as an educator and administrator with DUSD. Blanca also has been our liaison for two special service projects at Christmastime: adopting families at the Exchange Club Center, and Santa's visit and gifts to over seventy special needs students at Alameda School.

WOMAN'S CLUB OF DOWNEY

CARL OLSON: Carl has been a member of the Woman's Club of Downey for over eleven years. He has volunteered for many different jobs and positions during that time, mostly without recognition. He has been responsible for the publication of our club newsletter, "News From the Club House," and he is in charge of our monthly Bunco fundraiser. His odd jobs around the clubhouse include replacing tile flooring in a bathroom and installing safety tape on steps. He acts as the club's photographer, preserving our history for future generations. He has worked security detail for our weekly bingo fundraiser when needed, provided background music for our meetings, and has even worked as bartender.

Alameda wins big at robotics competition

■ Alameda Elementary earned first place honors in the third and fourth grade divisions.

DOWNEY — A group of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders from Alameda Elementary School competed in the Downey Unified School District Robolympics competition and walked away with first place honors in 3rd and 4th grade divisions.

They also won 2nd place in the 5th grade division and walked away with a score of 171, the highest score in their competition.

The annual event is sponsored by the Mary Stauffer Foundation.

Robolympics is a robotics competition where elementary students work in teams to score points in teamwork matches and Robot driving skills challenges. Teams solve an annual game challenge by designing, building, and programming a robot to compete in Robolympics. Thirteen Elementary schools across Downey Unified School District compete in the tournament.

The competition took place at the Warren High School Gymnasium and was so well attended that there was no more room to sit down in

the bleachers and many people had to wait outside.

"I believe we are changing the culture of robotics, you usually see this kind of love and participation from parents at high School football games," said Sariah Strang, Teacher/Coach, Alameda Robotics.

From the beginning of the year, Alameda Robotics students were challenged to build and program a computerized robot using Vex IQ code to complete tasks and overcome obstacles. Students were challenged to think like engineers and master the Engineering Process.

"They have so many more years in their lives, educationally as well as personally, where they can really do so much more and really expand on the knowledge and the lessons that they learned in robotics like; teamwork, perseverance, communication, collaboration, project management, and critical thinking," said Alex Gaytan, Alameda Robotics Head Coach.

This was the 4th Annual Downey Unified School District Robolympics Competition generously sponsored by the Mary Stauffer Foundation.



Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

During the pandemic, I felt as if hugs were a thing of the past. Ironically, hugs may have been what we needed the most during that difficult time.

Isolation and lack of human connection made quarantining so difficult, for so many. The longing for human touch and connection is a basic human need, and

there's strong evidence that hugs don't just make us feel good. Researchers have found that demonstrating warmth and affection can be good for our physical health, as well.

What happens when we are hugged? A feeling of calmness and relaxation is a result of the release of oxytocin. Oxytocin functions like a neurotransmitter in the brain. It can regulate our emotional responses and pro-social behaviors, including trust, empathy, positive memories, processing of bonding cues, and positive communication.

Oxytocin can induce anti-stress-like effects, including the reduction of blood pressure, pulse, and cortisol levels. It increases pain thresholds, acts as a tranquilizer, and

stimulates various types of positive social interactions. It promotes growth and healing. (The neurotransmitters oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine have been referred to as the "happy hormones.") Oxytocin also carries a protective effect on the immune system, helping to keep us healthy.

Fortunately, we can raise our oxytocin levels quite easily, through making social connections and bonds. Try giving a hug, getting a massage, listening to music, or even petting your dog or cat. Note that there are no foods or medications known to increase our oxytocin levels.

Believe it or not, studies have actually been done on the optimum number of hugs per day. While that number may be in the range of two to four, my own scientific guess is: the more, the better. Sadly, so many of us are touch-deprived, living lives in solitude, or working long hours.

I would guess that, given these neurochemical effects, that there may be yet more benefits. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to locate studies connecting hugging to heart disease, cancer, and such. You can imagine how difficult it would be to quantify this in a rigorously controlled study.

Nonetheless, I am recommending hugs whenever possible (with permission, of course). If a fellow human is not available, try hugging a pet or even a body pillow. I suggest that we all start giving and asking for more.

Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and former 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.



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Downey Unified partners with Apple to expand access to technology

Apple is changing the way technology is used in classrooms, and Downey Unified is leading the way.

DOWNEY — Something transformative is happening in the Downey Unified School District.

“There’s a buzz,” says Allison Box, principal at Lewis Elementary School. “It’s exciting — there’s never a boring day here, and that’s because our kids are immersed in learning environments that are truly dynamic.”

Across the district, students are using Apple technology to create projects as varied as podcasts with GarageBand, animations with Keynote, and movies with Clips — and these changes are reshaping classrooms.

At the center of this transformation is a group of educators who have applied their knowledge from the Apple Learning Coach program to rethink how teachers and students approach their studies.

Apple Learning Coach is a free professional learning program that trains instructional coaches, digital learning specialists, and other coaching educators to help teachers effectively use Apple technology in the classroom.

More than 1,900 educators have already completed the program in the United States, and the next cohort is now accepting applications through May 30.

Additionally, Apple Learning Coach is expanding

to 12 more countries, in addition to the United States, by the end of the year.

Downey Unified is home to 22,000 students from transitional kindergarten through grade 12 across 22 schools, including eight Apple Distinguished Schools. More than 10 years ago, the district began using iPod touch to aid with reading fluency for English language learners.

Fast forward to today, and all elementary schools provide an iPad to every student and, since the pandemic, middle schools are also 1:1 with iPad.

Downey follows the coherence model, where all schools have the same access to technology, education, tools, and services. For example, each school has an Innovation Lab with coding, robotics, and green screen film projects, and Student Tech Squads provide leadership opportunities where older students mentor younger students and facilitate districtwide creativity and innovation competitions.

In addition, a cornerstone at Downey is that all educators are provided professional learning opportunities — and since it launched in 2021, this includes Apple Learning Coach. To date, Downey has 15 certified Apple Learning Coaches, with an additional five educators currently enrolled in the program.

Through a mix of self-paced lessons and virtual workshops with Apple Professional Learning Specialists, each Apple Learning Coach gains a deeper understanding of how to support teachers

in the classroom as they integrate technology into learning. Upon completing the program, each Apple Learning Coach comes away with an actionable coaching portfolio they can begin using immediately.

Marnie Luevano was certified as an Apple Learning Coach last year. Her role as an instructional technology coach at Downey Unified brings her into the district’s elementary schools, where she helps teachers reimagine how they use Apple technology to supercharge lessons.

“We work with teachers to identify new ways their students can demonstrate what they’ve learned beyond the use of a worksheet or simply writing an essay,” says Luevano. “And then the kids are taking off with it — they’re so excited. Every time we visit the schools, the kids can’t wait to tell us about the podcast they’re finishing or show us the cover they designed for one of their projects. They’re not just trying to get the assignment done — they’re really enjoying the process.”

This year, as a result of the Apple Learning Coach program, the district’s coaches are deepening their use of Apple’s Everyone Can Create resources.

Every week, a new Everyone Can Create project is featured and distributed to educators, and the district technology team has created a digital fluency deck to give its teachers technology goals for students based on grade level.

For example, by the end of first grade, students will be able to record video using the camera on iPad, and by the end of second grade, they will be able to build on that skill to combine video with photos and audio in iMovie.

Jennifer Robbins has been working in Downey for 27 years and is the district’s director of elementary education, as well as an Apple Learning Coach.



Jennifer Robbins has been working in Downey for 27 years and is the district’s director of elementary education as well as an Apple Learning Coach. (Photo courtesy Apple)

She hasn’t just seen a change in the students as their access to technology has increased — she’s also watched her fellow educators learn and grow.

“Apple Learning Coach gave us the tools to be able to meet educators where they are, no matter the level of their technology knowledge,” says Robbins. “So we want to give voice and choice to our kids, but we want the same for our teachers. We work to customize the learning for them too.”

The results for Downey have been measurable. In an era of declining enrollment across California public schools, Downey has seen growth in its student population. Principal Box, who is also an Apple Learning Coach, credits the program with helping to transform schools in the district, including her own.

“Apple has truly been a game changer in education, both for our teachers and

our students,” says Box. “In applying the Apple Learning Coach model, we’re achieving a higher level of engagement, and it’s opening up so many possibilities — we’re thinking about what an augmented reality program or app design studio might look like for our school.”

“It’s helping us create a culture that embraces change and innovation, and prepares our students for the future, and I’m very excited about what’s next.”

Downey cracks down on catalytic converter thefts

DOWNEY— Downey City Council approved an ordinance on Tuesday barring the possession of a detached catalytic converter without proof of ownership.

Under the new directive, a person in possession of a catalytic converter that has been removed from a car would need to provide some sort of verifiable proof of ownership. This includes a license plate and VIN of the originating vehicle, contact information for the vehicle owner, a bill of sale from a core recycler or vehicle owner, and contact information for the current owner.

According to a report given by City Prosecutor James Eckert, catalytic converter theft has continued to rise, due in large part to the combination of the precious metals held inside which can be sold for upwards of \$1000, the ease that they can be taken, and the extreme difficulty in prosecution.

The city saw 142 reported catalytic converter thefts in 2020, then 340 in 2021 and 2022.

With the new ordinance, Downey is hopeful to deter future thefts, and make it easier to prosecute violators. As it is written, the ordinance does not require proof of theft or identification of the victim.

Replacement of a catalytic converter can cost California drivers up to \$2,000 if they do not have comprehensive insurance coverage.

The ordinance was approved unanimously.

Alex Dominguez, staff writer

In Memory of
Maria Emilia Ayuso
 April 5, 1932 - March 31, 2023



Maria Emilia Ayuso, known as Millie and Mami Mira to her loved ones, passed away peacefully in the afternoon of March 31, 2023, at Whittier Presbyterian Hospital. She was 90 years old.

Maria was born and raised in Puerto Rico and was an only child. In her 20’s, she moved to New York, where she resided for over 20 years. She also lived in Florida for a while and then settled in Downey, California with her daughter Darlene, her son-in-law David and grandson Tim.

In her free time, Maria enjoyed reading, cooking, baking, shopping, going to the casino and spending time with her family. She had a passion for gardening and an incredible green thumb. Her cooking brought joy to those around her.

In 2021, Maria was predeceased by her son Dennis, who had ALS. She sadly lost her husband Yoel in September 2022. They were married for 58 years. Maria is survived by her daughters, Darlene, Dianne, Brenda, Lorraine, Yvonne, her sons-in-law, her granddaughter, five grandsons and two great granddaughters. Maria will be deeply missed by her family and all who knew her. She will live on in our hearts. May she rest in peace.

Services will be held Saturday, May 20, 2023, at 1:30 pm at St Pius X in Santa Fe Springs.

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US workers deserve a break. It's time for a 32-hour work week.

By **Bernie Sanders**

Bernie Sanders is a U.S. senator from Vermont.

In 1938, as a result of a massive grassroots effort by the trade union movement, the Fair Labor Standards Act was enacted by Congress to reduce the work week to 40 hours. Back then, the American people were sick and tired of working 80, 90, 100 hours a week with very little time for rest, relaxation or quality time with their families. They demanded change and they won a huge victory. That's the good news.

The bad news is that despite an explosion in technology, major increases in worker productivity, and transformational changes in the workplace and American society, the Fair Labor Standards Act has not been reformed in 80 years. The result: millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages, with the average worker making nearly \$50 a week less than he or she did 50 years ago, after adjusting for inflation. Further, family life is suffering, as parents don't have adequate time for their kids, life expectancy for working people is in decline, and increased stress is a major factor in the mental health crisis we are now experiencing.

Compared with other countries, our workplace record is not good. In 2021, American employees worked 184 more hours than Japanese workers, 294 more hours than British workers, and 442 more hours than German workers. Unbelievably, in 2023 there are millions of Americans who work at jobs with no vacation time.

It's time to reduce the work week to 32 hours with no loss in pay. It's time to reduce the stress level in our country and allow Americans to enjoy a better quality of life. It's time to make sure that working people benefit from rapidly increasing technology, not just large corporations that are already doing phenomenally well.

Think about all of the extraordinary changes that have taken

place in the workplace over the past several decades. When I was elected mayor of Burlington, Vermont, in 1981, there were no computers in city hall. There were no chatboxes, no printers, no emails, no calculators, no cellphones, no conference calling or Zoom.

In factories and warehouses, robots and sophisticated machinery did not exist or were only used in primitive forms.

In grocery stores and shops of all kinds, there were no checkout counters that utilized bar codes.

As a result of the extraordinary technological transformation that we have seen in recent years, American workers are now 480% more productive than they were in the 1940s.

In addition, there are far more workers today. In the 1940s, less than 65% of Americans between 25 and 54 were in the workforce. Today, with most families requiring two breadwinners to pay the bills, that number is over 83%.

Yet despite all of these incredible gains in productivity, over 40% of US employees now work more than 45 hours per week; 12% work more than 60 hours a week; and the average worker now works 43 hours per week. Many are on their computers or answering emails seven days a week.

Moving to a 32-hour work week with no loss of pay is not a radical idea. In fact, movement in that direction is already taking place in other developed countries. France, the seventh-largest economy in the world, has a 35-hour work week and is considering reducing it to 32. The work week in Norway and Denmark is about 37 hours.

Recently, the United Kingdom conducted a four-day pilot program of 3,000 workers at over 60 companies. Not surprisingly, it showed that happy workers were more productive. The pilot was so successful that 92% of the companies that participated decided to maintain a four-day

week, because of the benefits to both employers and employees.

Another pilot of nearly 1,000 workers at 33 companies in seven countries found that revenue increased by more than 37% in the companies that participated and 97% of workers were happy with the four-day workweek.

Studies have shown that despite working fewer hours, workers are either more, or just as, productive during a four-day work week. One study found that worker productivity increased 55% after companies implemented a four-day week. A trial of four-day work weeks for public-sector workers in Iceland found that productivity remained the same or improved across the majority of workplaces. In 2019, Microsoft tested a four-day work week in Japan and reported a 40% increase in productivity.

In addition, 57% of workers in companies that have moved to a four-day work week have indicated that they are less likely to quit their jobs.

Moreover, at a time when so many of our people are struggling with their mental health, 71% of workers in companies that have moved to a four-day work week report feeling less burnout, 39% reported feeling less stress and 46% reported feeling less fatigued.

As much as technology and worker productivity has exploded in recent years, there is no debate that new breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and robotics will only accelerate the transformation of our economy. That transformation should benefit all, not just the few. It should create more time for friends and family, more time for rest and relaxation, more time for all of us to develop our human potential.

Eighty-three years after President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed a 40-hour work week into law, it's time for us to move to a 32-hour work week at no loss of pay.

Clarence Thomas's enablers

By **Joe Conason**

Joe Conason wrote a column for the New York Observer from 1992 to 2011. His most recent book, "Big Lies: The Right-Wing Propaganda Machine and How It Distorts the Truth" was a New York Times bestseller.

Every fresh revelation of an ethical lapse by Clarence Thomas raises the question to which Republican leaders apparently have no answer: Just how much crooked behavior by a conservative Supreme Court justice will they justify?

So far, they seem utterly untroubled by Thomas' acceptance from a right-wing billionaire of lavish vacations, jet travel, the lucrative purchase of his mother's house and the full cost of his grandnephew's very expensive private school tuition — or by his repeated and willful failure to disclose these dubious "gifts."

Instead of confronting the scandal, Republicans pretend to be offended by the very notion that Thomas should be held to account for his misconduct. Sen. Mike Lee of Utah suggests that "sanctimonious" inquiries concerning the justice's deranged ethics are somehow comparable to the Ku Klux Klan's racist terrorism.

Such fake indignation may become hard to sustain, however, now that we know conservative lobbyist Leonard Leo — the prominent right-wing operative whose hand lies behind the creation of the current Supreme Court — has laundered tens of thousands of dollars into the personal bank account of Thomas through his far-right activist spouse.

Those secret payments, arranged through a nonprofit group, should prompt a thorough investigation as well as spur more

sweeping Senate hearings on the grift surrounding the high court. The unscrupulous scheme recalls a quip attributed to the late New York Gov. Al Smith, who pointed to a student while visiting a law library and said, "There is a young man learning how to call a bribe a fee."

According to The Washington Post, Leonard Leo directed pollster Kellyanne Conway in January 2012 to send "another \$25,000" to Ginni Thomas — a nice fat check that apparently was only one in a series totaling as much as \$100,000. At the time, Conway's firm, the Polling Company, worked for the Judicial Education Project, a nonprofit ostensibly run by its officers of record but in fact controlled by Leo. He instructed the obedient Conway to "give" the money to Thomas and keep the truth out of any paperwork: "No mention of Ginni, of course."

Of course! Clearly Conway understood what Leo meant, because she sent a bill for \$25,000 to the Judicial Education Project that very day, complete with a fabricated purpose: "Supplement for Constitution Polling and Opinion Consulting." Documents examined by Post reporters show that between June 2011 and January 2012, the Polling Company sent \$80,000 to Ginni Thomas through her firm, Liberty Consultants, and anticipated sending an additional \$20,000 before the year's end. Nobody has seen any evidence that Thomas did any actual work for that huge sum.

Within that same time frame, the Judicial Education Project filed a brief to the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the landmark case that prompted Thomas and his right-wing colleagues to eviscerate the Voting Rights Act — exactly as Leo urged them to do. That Thomas could have been expected to

endorse just such a betrayal of Black voters in no way dispels the stink. In a statement to the Post, Leo claimed with characteristic insolence and impunity that he was merely trying to protect the "privacy" of the Thomases from "malicious and gossipy" people.

No doubt anybody who violates federal laws and ethical norms prefers privacy to public exposure. That might well apply with extra force to Leo, whose self-dealing chicanery in siphoning off millions in nonprofit funds for his personal profit has lately come under scrutiny. But what this looks like is a criminal scheme with possible elements of tax fraud, public corruption, money laundering and conspiracy.

The fact that Leo, Thomas and Conway might escape prosecution under the federal statute of limitations does not excuse authorities from investigating this shameful affair. Not only should the cabal tainting the high court be required to testify under oath about the precise details of their financial relationship, but the records of Leo's enormous influence-peddling network should be subpoenaed to determine whether he and his organizations have broken tax and lobbying laws.

Looking beyond this particular gang of scoundrels, Congress must now establish strict ethical guidelines for the Supreme Court, which Chief Justice John Roberts and his colleagues have so disgracefully resisted. If no cleansing remedy is applied, the public will come to see that behind the court's rulings overturning long-established American rights lies an indelible stain of corruption.

Homelessness is not a valid lifestyle choice

By **Betsy McCaughey**

Betsy McCaughey is a former lieutenant governor of New York and chairman of the Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths.

Americans must not surrender to the new normal of squalor and urban chaos — of tent encampments, public defecation, panhandling and shouting schizophrenics.

In the aftermath of Jordan Neely's tragic death on a New York subway, advocates for the homeless and most Democratic politicians are demanding unfettered freedom for the homeless to live on the streets, even with mental illness.

Advocates are taking over subway stations and dominating the mainstream media with their demands. Too little is being said about the needs of the quiet majority.

People who go to a job every day or operate a business or take their kids to school need safe sidewalks and public transportation.

Yet Democrats in the Oregon state legislature are pushing a bill to guarantee the homeless the right to sue for \$1,000 if they are harassed or removed from a public space.

Democratic lawmakers in California recently defeated a ban on homeless encampments within 500 feet of a school, playground or youth center. So, it's OK for kindergarteners to have to step over syringes and navigate buckets of urine on their way into school?

Even after Michelle Go was pushed to sudden death off a Times Square subway platform by a mentally ill homeless person in 2022, the New York Civil Liberties Union continues to say, "we must not lock people with mental health issues away in hospitals" and "allow police officers to simply sweep homeless people out of the subways so they are kept out of sight."

New York Times opinion columnist Jamelle Bouie railed this week that "we are living through a vicious campaign of demonization and hostility toward the homeless" with "prominent voices" advocating "sweeping homeless people from the streets like trash." Bouie is wrong. The opposite is true. The loudest voices are demanding "rights" for the homeless, but not for the rest of us.

The National Coalition for the Homeless considers local laws against panhandling and sidewalk camping as violations of the constitutional rights of the unhoused.

What about rights for Pedro Morales, an Austin, Texas, small-business owner? A homeless encampment has popped up in the alley next to the building he owns. "I have to clean up somebody else's mess," he explains.

Same is true of Edy Perez, who owns an auto repair business in Los Angeles. The homeless have set up a sprawl of tents nearby. Once customers see that, they never come back, he

complains.

Urban homelessness emerged as a problem in the 1980s, in part because civil libertarians demanded that mental hospitals be closed. The number of patients living in state hospitals across the nation plunged from 535,000 in 1960 to 137,000 by 1980. The mentally ill wound up on the streets.

The problem worsened when the Obama administration and homeless advocates won a lawsuit to prevent Boise, Idaho, from outlawing camping on sidewalks and public parks. Obama's Justice Department deemed homelessness a legally protected lifestyle choice. Ridiculous.

A person who "chooses" street living, instead of shelter or hospitalization, is exposed to hypothermia, disease and crime. On average, a homeless person survives only to age 48, losing 30 years of a normal lifespan. It's worse for women.

Allowing that choice is neither compassionate to the homeless nor fair to the rest of society.

Kudos to a handful of Democratic politicians who are bucking their party to advocate for involuntarily hospitalizing the mentally ill homeless.

In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams is employing teams of EMS workers and health professionals to get the mentally ill homeless off the streets and subways and into hospitals. Predictably, the mainstream press are slamming Adams' policy for violating the "civil rights" of the homeless.

In Portland, Oregon, Democratic Mayor Ted Wheeler is pushing to loosen the state's involuntary commitment law, making it easier to hospitalize the homeless against their will.

Neely's death is igniting a nationwide debate over homelessness — the only good to come out of the tragedy. If he had been hospitalized for mental illnesses, maybe he'd be alive today.

Seize this moment to speak up and denounce the delusional argument that street living is a "right." It dooms the homeless to short, brutal lives, and the rest of us to filth, crime and chaos.

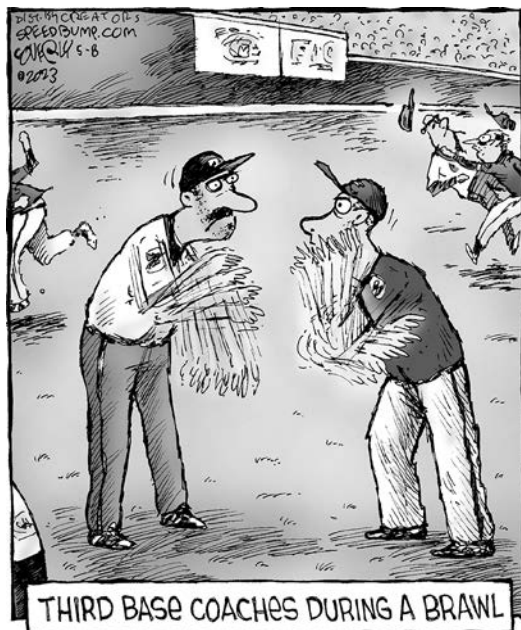
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SPEED BUMP



DAVE COVERLY



Downey Community Calendar

CITY MEETINGS

1st & 3rd Wednesday, 6:30pm: Planning Commission, Council Chamber at City Hall.
 1st Tue., 4:00pm.: Recreation and Community Services Commission, Council Chamber, City Hall.
 2nd & 4th Tue., 6:30pm: City Council, Council Chamber.
 3rd Tue., 6:00pm: Library Advisory Board, at Downey City Library.
 3rd Thurs., 6:30pm: CERT, at Downey City Council Chamber at City Hall, for more info call 299-5462.
 4th Mon., 5 pm: Green Task Force, at City Hall.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

MONDAYS

7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 2, at Downey United Methodist Church, call 869-6478.
 4:30 pm: Courage Forward Meeting, at 10829 New St, 2nd Floor, call 213-545-6810.
 4th Mon., 7:30 pm: Downey Numismatists, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.

TUESDAYS

9 am: Quilters group, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, call 803-4459.
 9:30 am: Downey Seniors Club, at Apollo Park, call Irene Vallini at 328-7039.
 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.
 12 pm: Rotary Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Mel Sanchez 562-665-4125.
 6 pm: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, contact Salvador Cervantes: tmsalcpuede@gmail.com.
 7 pm: Downey Knights of Columbus Bingo, at 11231 Rives Ave., call 923-1932.
 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 351, at Furman Park, contact 562-500-5093 for more information.
 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 441, at Apollo Park, email scoutmaster@downeyboyscouts.com.
 7:30 pm: Downey Master Chorale, at Cornerstone Church, contact info@downeymasterchorale.org.
 1st Tues., 7:30 am: Gangs Out of Downey, at City Hall training room.
 2nd Tues., 6 pm: Downey Fly Fishers, at Apollo Park, call 425-7936.
 3rd Tues., 12 pm: Downey Newcomers Club, call Marilyn 928-2623.
 3rd Tues., 6:30 pm: Community Emergency Response Team meeting, Fire station 1, 12222 Paramount.
 3rd Tues., 6 pm: American Legion #270, at Sizzler Restaurant, call 544-0372.
 Tues., Thurs. & Sat., 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza 652-4399

WEDNESDAYS

7 am: Kiwanis Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.
 10:30 am: Ballroom dance class, at Downey Community Center, call 776 7270.
 1 pm: Women's Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call Marie Puch at 869-4366.
 7 pm: Royal Rangers Outpost 132, at Desert Reign Church, call 562-861-6011.
 1st Wed., 11 am: Woman's Club of Downey, call Cheryl Olson 833-8954.
 1st Wed., 11:30 am: Downey Coordinating Council, Community Center, call Bobbi Bruce 440-5416.
 1st Wed., 7:30 pm: Downey Stamp Club, at Maude Price School cafeteria, call 928-3028.
 2nd Wed., 11:30 am: Christian Women's Club, call Marilyn 928-2623.
 2nd Wed., 3:30 pm: Keep Downey Beautiful, at City Hall, call 904-7102.
 2nd Wed., 7 pm: Downey Model A Club, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, call 484-8415.
 3rd Wed.: Downey Dog Obedience Club, for information please call Gina 869-5213 or Valerie 420-2972.
 3rd Wed., 10 am: Los Angeles County Quilters Guild, at Women's Club, call 860-8821 or 927-3635.
 3rd Wed., 6:00 pm: Sister Cities of Downey, at Barabara Riley Senior Center, call Gloria Nezahualcoyotl (562) 776-6136.
 4th Wed., 7:30 pm: US Coast Guard Aux. Flotilla 5-10, First Presbyterian Church, call Brian 419-5420.
 Wed. & Fri., 10:15 am: Senior Bingo, at Apollo Park, call 904-7223

THURSDAYS

7:30 am: Connections Networking, at Bob's Big Boy, for info., call Nick Smith, 861-5222.
 7:30 am.: Soroptimist Int'l of Downey, for information, call Mia Vasquez, 806-3217.
 9:30 am: Take off Pounds Sensibly, at Barabara Riley Senior Center, call (800) 932-8677.
 12 pm: Bingo, at Woman's Club of Downey - Proceeds benefit Rancho.
 12 pm: Optimist Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center.
 6:30 pm: Downey United Masonic Lodge # 220, 8244 3rd St., call 862-4176.
 7:30 pm: Downey Elks Lodge #2020, call 803-3557.
 1st Thurs., 6 pm, All other Thurs. 12 pm: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 283-2335.
 1st Thurs., 7:30 pm: Downey Amateur Radio Club, EOC room Downey Fire Station #1, 12222 Paramount Blvd.
 2nd Thurs., 12 pm: Creative Purposes, call Bill Wallace 923-2311.
 2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm: Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club, call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.
 2nd & 4th Thurs., 6:30 pm: Downey Lions Club, at Mimi's, call Lenora (310) 283-9825.
 3rd Thurs., 4 pm: Public Works Committee, at City Hall Training Room.
 4th Thurs., 10 am: Assistance League, at Casa De Parley Johnson, call 869-0232.
 4th Thurs., 7:30 pm: Downey Historical Society programs, at Community Center, call 862-2777.

FRIDAYS

7:30 am: Pro Networkers, at Mimi's Cafe, call Barbara Briley Beard at 869-7618.
 3rd Fri., 8:30 am: Women's "In His Glory" Ministry at Los Amigos C. C. 622-3785.

SATURDAYS

9 am: Farmers Market, Downey Avenue at 3rd Street, call 904-7246.

The **DOWNEY GRAFFITI HOTLINE NUMBER** Report graffiti to this number. **923-4484**

THE NEWSDAY CROSSWORD

Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
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 by Fred Piscop

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The pan-fried steak DIANE (27 Across) is believed to be named for the Roman hunt goddess Diana, as are various game-related foods. As a balance for Donald Duck's three nephews (41 Across), Daisy Duck has three nieces, named April, May and June. Founded in 1829, PERTH (65 Across), the capital of Western Australia, saw a substantial population increase in the late 19th century as a result of multiple gold rushes in the area.



Downey swimmers win league titles

■ Boys team wins 11th consecutive league title, girls win 7th; boys have three relay teams advance to finals; 200 Free (10th), 200 Medley (15th), 400 Free (15th), while girls have one relay, 400 Free (11th)

By John M. Sherrard
Contributor

DOWNEY — The success in the water keeps on going for the Downey girls and boys swim teams this year.

The boys won their 11th consecutive league title (6-0) and 27th overall in program history, with an overall record of 12-0, while the girls won their seventh consecutive title.

In addition, the Vikings were well represented at the recently held CIF Swimming D3 Championships at Riverside City College last week.

Downey is now in the Gateway League after competing in the San Gabriel League for years.

The boys qualified eight swimmers for the CIF-Southern Section Division 3 Prelims. They were: Seniors, Aidan Crisonino, Jorge Torres, Nick Chieng and Diego Campos; juniors, Vincent Velasco and Sean Kennedy; sophomore- Zinadin Rosales and freshman Nathan Martinez.

Crisonino (200 IM, 100 Fly) and Martinez (200 and 500 Free) were in two events each, while Kennedy (200 Free), Rosales (200 IM), Campos (50 Free) and Velasco (100 Back) were in one event. Torres and Chieng qualified for the relay teams.

While nobody made it back to finals for individual events, all three relays represented Downey at the finals.

The three relay teams and their swimmers were as follows:

200 Freestyle Relay - Campos, Crisonino, Torres and Chieng. They finished first in their heat and 10th overall with a time of 1:32.28.

200 Medley Relay - Campos, Crisonino, Rosales and Velasco. The team finished 15th overall with a time of 1:44.32.

400 Free Relay - Kennedy, Velasco, Martinez and Torres also finished 15th overall with a time of 3:24.77.

“The Downey boys’ swim had a great 2023 season,” boys swim coach Shaun Delhousay said. “This year’s squad was a great mix of different grade levels. Seniors, all the way down to freshman, contributed to the wins. Seniors Aidan Crisonino, Diego Campos, and Jordan Curiel led the way, while underclassmen Sean Kennedy, Vincent Velasco, Zinadin Rosales and Nathan Martinez added huge individual wins and in relays.”

Boys Gateway League finals highlights

* The 200 Medley Relay team led the whole way, taking first with a time of 1:44.05. It was just 1.5 seconds off the school record. Velasco (Backstroke) hit a 27.51 Personal Record (PR) and anchor Campos with a 22.40 (PR).

* Both Martinez (1:52.59) and Kennedy (1:52.93) set PRs in the 200-yard free

* Crisonino (2:09.35) and Rosales (2:09.70) both had PRs in the 200 Individual Medley.

* Campos (22.84) set a PR for the 50 Free.

* Crisonino (56.90) again set a PR in the 100-yard butterfly.

* The 100 yard freestyle was won Campos with a PR (50.99).

* The 500 free was won by

Martinez with a PR of 5:15.27.

* Velasco finally broke a minute in the 100 Backstroke, coming in at 59.44 (PR).

*The 100 yard Breaststroke was won by Rosales with a PR time of 1:06.56.

“The entire team swam a great meet at the league finals,” concluded Delhousay.

Girls easily win league

The girls’ team, which finished with a 9-2 record in the Gateway League, qualified six for CIF.

“The Downey Girls Swim team had a great season this year,” girls swim coach Salomon Castro said. “It is great to be back at CIF and make it to finals. We had two relays and four individuals qualify. All girls had personal best times this year at CIF.

“I look forward to being even stronger next season with the team being led by Rylie (Patterson) and Alia (De La Mora).”

The two relay teams were: 200 Medley Relay - Berlynn Mani, Patterson, Alexa Gimenez and Kaitlin De La Cruz. The 400 Free Relay made it to the finals and consisted of Gimenez, Patterson, De La Mora and De La Cruz.

Gimenez and De La Cruz are seniors, Mani is a sophomore and De La Mora and Patterson are freshmen.

The individuals who all qualified for two events each, and their events are as follows: De La Mora (200 IM, 100 Fly), Patterson (500 Free, 100 Breast), Gimenez (200 Free, 100 Fly) and De La Cruz (50 and 100 Free).

De La Cruz, a four-year varsity swimmer and Co-Captain, won the 50 and 100 free in all but one dual meet

this year.

“She was a true team leader in and out of the pool,” Cortez said. “The other captain is Gimenez and she would consistently win the 200 free and 100 fly in dual meets. She will be playing water polo at UCLA next year.

“Usually, seniors have a difficult time finishing out their high school career,” added Cortez, of De La Cruz. “She was at every practice giving 100 per cent. She had a personal best time of 26.07 in the 50 free, which qualified her for CIF. She was the crucial anchor in the relays.”

Boys Gateway League Final Standings

1. Downey 267
2. La Mirada 95
3. Warren 77
4. Paramount 36
5. Gahr 26
6. Mayfair 18
7. Bellflower 13

Girls Gateway League

Final Standings

1. Downey
2. Warren
3. Paramount
4. Mayfair
5. La Mirada
6. Gahr

What they said:

Kaitlin De La Cruz, Downey senior: “I was excited. It felt nice and it led up to something big at CIF. We dropped seven seconds on our relay and our time was better than some of the championship final times. It was a successful swim.

“This was my last time with everyone, and it was a little sad. I definitely improved over the years. Swimming gave me an opportunity to meet more people.

“On leadership, it’s very important and it’s like building a relationship. I think it’s an experience that I’m helping my teammates and they’re helping me.”

Diego Campos, Downey senior: “(CIF) felt good. It was satisfying and exciting. Coach

(Delhousay) was ecstatic. I’ve never seen him so excited.”

Nick Chieng, Downey senior: “I felt accomplished and surprised that we made it. All of our hard work and struggles and sacrifices paid off.

“I just felt so proud of everyone that supported us at Riverside. It was pretty intimidating, and we did our all.”

Jorge Torres, Downey senior: “I was super excited, and I really wanted to PR. It (racing in the third leg) felt good. As soon as I jumped in, I knew I was going to get a good time. It was very competitive, and I managed to pass the other teams. I PR’d for a winning leg. Diego won the anchor leg.

“It was pretty satisfying

after all of these years; we accomplished a great feat. It was pretty rewarding to get there. These were the last laps of our high school careers.

“[Coach Delhousay] was part of us and was super excited. I didn’t think that was our coach.”

Aidan Crisonino, Downey senior: “It was super exciting in CIF. At D2 (prior to this year) no one qualified. D2 is kind of like the Ivy League.

“At the D3 level we will be able to compete more at that level. All three relays in CIF haven’t been competing.

“It felt satisfying. We put months and months into practice, and we were working our butts off. Not only we made it, we won (consolation final).”

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Updates from Mayor Claudia Frometa

Hello Downey,

To all the Mothers and Mother-figures in our community, Happy Mother's Day weekend! Thank you, Moms, for all your efforts, your sacrifices and commitment to your families. As you pour into the lives of your children and those around you, you leave an imprint that spills into our Downey. Wishing all of you a blessed day/weekend celebrating your impact in the lives of many. There is no greater love than the love of a mother.

Update on Fire Station #4

I know this is long overdue and I am happy to report remediation and construction at Fire Station #4 is now complete. I was informed repopulation will occur within the next several days for a full reopening the week of May 22nd.

I share the anger and frustration from District 4 residents on this prolonged closure. I am looking forward to having it back in service, and our displaced fire crew from that station cannot wait to be back.

Community/Economic Development

I have shared with you my focus as Mayor this year is to bring economic development to the forefront in our city. It is vital we look at revitalizing empty buildings and storefronts along main corridors.

First, however, we had to bring stability to city hall by filling key leadership positions, starting with our City Manager Roger Bradley. I am grateful for his leadership, thanks to him, we have now filled much needed management positions in finance, public works, and community development.

I have asked for a closer look at our planning department as we must ensure residential and commercial projects have faster turnaround times. Downey continues to be an aspirational city and we continue to attract businesses; however, it is our goal to streamline and improve our processes for greater efficiency, expediency and less bureaucratic red tape.

I do want to acknowledge our great city staff, who amidst significant staffing challenges for many months, has continued to work aggressively to fill empty spaces in key areas of our city. We are continuing to work on additional projects, and we continue the conversation with Sprouts. I look forward to making some announcements soon.

Public Safety, Transient Activity & Speed Enforcement

This week as we recognize National Police Week, I encourage you to thank a police officer and his/her commitment to keeping our neighborhoods safe.

I have heard from many of you via email about vandalized cars, robberies, and catalytic converter thefts. While our Downey Police Department (DPD) continues to respond as quickly as they can, many times the crimes have already occurred, and the perpetrators are long gone, but our DPD will continue to respond. Please continue to report these acts and please get involved in a Neighborhood Watch group in your neighborhood. This is a great way to connect with neighbors and watch for suspicious activities. If you see something, please, say something.

Currently, we have over 230+ groups throughout our city. To find out more information or to apply, please contact Neighborhood Watch Coordinator Stephanie Arroyo at (562) 904-2374 or sarroyo@downeyca.org

As we continue to see a rise in crime in every city, increased thefts with no consequences for the thieves, we must realize the people who change policies on crime are those people elected to office. As our communities' struggle, let us pause and remember, policies soft on crime and soft on criminals put our communities in danger. Let's remember that next time we vote!

We continue to monitor increased transient activity along various segments in our city. Thank you, residents, for making us on council aware when there are issues related to homeless encampments.

Our city is 12.5 square miles and unless we hear from our residents, we are not always aware of certain

incidents. Clean ups will continue in coordination with LA County Dept. of Mental Health, LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), PATH, and DPD.

Unfortunately, our DPD cannot be everywhere all at once, however, our Police Chief is committed to deploying extra patrols and mobilizing additional resources to locations in need. I have also heard from many of you regarding racing and speeding along segments in our city. The stretch of Downey Ave., between Stewart & Gray and Imperial Hwy., or between Florence Ave. and Gallatin Rd., Brookshire Ave., also between Stewart & Gray Rd. & Imperial Hwy. or to the north of Florence Ave. and Gallatin Rd. Along with Stewart & Gray Rd. between Rives Ave. and past the curve headed to South Gate and of course, the area of Haledon Ave. north of Florence Ave. where vehicles have been doing donuts as of late. DPD will continue to conduct speed enforcement activities throughout our city and look for illegal street racing and individuals utilizing empty parking lots/areas to do donuts. Drivers involved in street racing will have their vehicles impounded and will face steep fines.

Community Engagement

We've had many events over the last several weeks including Downey's One Day of Service which coincided with Earth Day. Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who participated by cleaning up portions of our city, painted over graffiti and helped bag food at Food HELP. A special thanks to the Public Works crew for their diligence and hard work assisting residents with the fruit tree giveaway.

This week, we also celebrate Nurses Week, a city with three hospitals we are bound to know and/or run into a nurse. Please thank a Nurse this week for his/her service and commitment to patient care, quality care and empathy. We appreciate them as they care for us during our most vulnerable times.

Downey's anti-litter campaign, #BINIT, started during my first Mayoral year in 2021 and continues strong. Residents may call CalMet/Athens services at 562.259.1239 to arrange a bulky item pick up. Additional important numbers to save on your phones:

- Graffiti Hotline: (562) 923-4484
- Abandoned Shopping Carts: (800) 252-4613
- Illegal Dumping: (562) 904-7194

The Keep Downey Beautiful Clean Ups continue to bring together residents who want to make a change and help beautify our city. The next clean-up is scheduled for 9 am this Saturday, May 13 at Independence Park.

On Saturday, May 20, we will have the 2nd Annual Touch-a-Truck event at Independence Park. Bring the family and your children to explore the various vehicles representing police, fire and public works.

As we get closer to the end of a school year, I do want to recognize the efforts of all the high school seniors that will be graduating in a few weeks. Students from Columbus, Warren and Downey High Schools, may the next chapter in your lives be filled with adventure, opportunities to grow and give back. You are #DowneyStrong and we are very proud of what you have accomplished!

It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your 49th Mayor. Please contact my office with any questions or concerns at (562) 904-7274 or email me at cfrometa@downeyca.org. Also, look for Mayor Frometa's 90 Second Round up every two weeks!

I welcome appointments for in-person visits. You can also follow my Facebook page for regular updates at



Mayor Claudia Frometa, right, and Police Chief Leslie Murray

Claudia M. Frometa Mayor, City of Downey, along with our City's Facebook page, "City of Downey Government Agency," for regular updates.

Please also download the Downey App on your mobile device. Through this app, you can immediately report illegally dumped items, street repairs, trash, graffiti removal, neighborhood light repairs, etc.

- #DowneyStrong
- #EngagedCommunitiesAreStrongCommunities
- #ThisIsDowney
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DOWNEY FOUNDATION
FOR INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM

Dear Downey Patriot Valued Reader,

On behalf of The Downey Patriot, I am thrilled to announce the establishment of the Downey Foundation for Independent Journalism, a non-profit foundation launched by the Downey Patriot newspaper. As a cherished member of our community, I wanted to share this exciting news and invite you to be part of our journey.

For several years, the Downey Patriot has been dedicated to providing reliable and unbiased news coverage, championing the principles of journalism, and serving as a beacon of truth in our community. We strongly believe that independent journalism is a cornerstone of a thriving democracy, and it is with this conviction that we have founded the Downey Foundation for Independent Journalism.

The Downey Foundation for Independent Journalism aims to ensure the sustainability and integrity of local news reporting, fostering an informed and engaged citizenry. Our mission is threefold: to support the training and professional development of journalists, to promote investigative journalism, and to enhance access to reliable local news for all residents of our community.

To achieve these goals, we are seeking tax-deductible donations from generous individuals like yourself who share our commitment to independent journalism. Your support will play a crucial role in empowering local journalists, enabling them to cover important stories, hold those in power accountable, and provide unbiased information to our community.

With your contribution, we will establish scholarships and training programs for aspiring journalists, ensuring that the next generation is well-equipped to uphold the principles of ethical and accurate reporting. We will also dedicate resources to support investigative journalism projects, fostering in-depth reporting that uncovers truths, reveals corruption, and sheds light on critical issues affecting our community.

Additionally, the Downey Foundation for Independent Journalism aims to address the challenge of access to local news in underserved areas. We will explore innovative approaches, such as expanding our digital presence, partnering with community organizations, and launching initiatives to bridge the information gap for those who face barriers to accessing reliable news sources.

We kindly invite you to contribute to the Downey Foundation for Independent Journalism and become a vital part of our mission. Your tax-deductible donation, no matter the size, will make a difference in supporting local journalism and nurturing a vibrant democracy.

Thank you for considering our request and for your commitment to the ideals of independent journalism. Together, we can make a lasting impact and ensure that our community remains well-informed, engaged, and empowered. I am happy to answer any questions you may have or provide further information on how your contribution will be utilized. Please contact our office at (562) 904-3668 or jennifer@thedowneypatriot.com.

We look forward to your support and the possibilities that lie ahead.

Sincerely,


Jennifer DeKay
Chief Executive Officer
Downey Foundation for Independent Journalism

Donations can be mailed to:
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