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SPEAKS IN WASHINGTON AT MEMORIAL WALL

Local Marine veteran remembers Vietnam on Memorial Day

"They didn't die alone."

Long-time Pomona-area Marine veteran Jesse "Bulldog" Gonzales received an official invitation to fly back to Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day and speak in annual ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

He took with him his good friend for the past 40 years Richard Gonzalez, of West Covina, also a Marine and also a Vietnam veteran.

The trip apparently was a bit of a challenge for Delta Air Lines – Richard Gonzalez, a double am-

putee, uses a motorized wheelchair that reportedly was damaged by handlers (Delta provided a temporary backup with smaller batteries, the batteries ran down in Washington and Bulldog ended up doing some pushing on the sidewalk), and disability accommodations at Washington's five-star Watergate Hotel were not completely "dialed in" on their arrival, according to Jesse Gonzales – despite the fact that he had "worked everything out" long before their flight across country.

But his message in front of

the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, which lists names of 58,318 Americans who gave their lives in service to their country, was simple – that in combat in Vietnam, "dying alone didn't happen to a lot of those guys on the wall – we held their hand to their last breath," Bulldog said, relating his comments in Washington to La Nueva Voz.

"They moved on and we moved on and we died harder than they did because of the memories that were in our mind," he said.

Bulldog was called up toward the end of the ceremonies in front of "The Three Soldiers" bronze statue, also called "The Three Ser-

Marine remembers Vietnam... pg. 8



SPEAKING AT VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL -- Pomona-area U.S. Marine Vietnam Veteran Jesse "Bulldog" Gonzales poses for a photo at the podium in front of the world-famous Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Gonzales, active locally and worldwide in veterans affairs, was invited back to Washington to speak on Memorial Day.

Graduation time throughout Pomona means starting new chapter for seniors

Hundreds of students representing the Class of 2021 graduated all around Pomona this month and last – all of them prepared for their exciting albeit sometimes tearful transition into the next phase of their life.

La Nueva Voz covered four graduation ceremonies this year – including Pomona's iPoly, Village Academy High School and, last month, one of Cal Poly University Pomona's 20 first-ever "drive in" graduations held

Graduation time... pg. 14



Karina (Xin) Fang
SAE Valetorian

SAE ushers in return of live performance in Pomona's Arts Colony

Live concerts are back in Downtown Pomona!

And they are back first, thanks to Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise and two students performing in their senior recitals on the rooftop of the Fox Theater late last month.

Harmony Nichols kicked it all off on the theme "Beautiful City," followed the next night by Maleyah Moses, on the theme "Hope."



Maleyah Moses

La Nueva Voz had the opportunity to attend on night two.

Then the obvious question is, "How was Maleyah?"

Powerful and convincing singer? No question. Broadway quality? Pretty darned close. High school senior? Hey, La Nueva Voz was still having trouble getting the pennies in those little slots on our penny loafers in our se-

SAE live... pg. 2

PAID ADVERTORIAL

Planting a seed — How gardening and nature are good for your mental well-being

You have probably heard someone say, "nature heals" at some point in your life, but did you know that research and science agree with this statement? There's growing evidence to suggest that spending time in nature has positive effects on mental health and well-being. Exposure to green space reduces stress and increases a sense of wellness and belonging. For many, the pandemic gave individuals the opportunity to nurture and strengthen their relationship with nature. People readily chose natural settings to retreat and both de-stress and relax: some enjoyed views of nearby trees and gardens during periods of isolation, took walks after Zoom-filled days to breathe fresh air, or socialized at a distance with friends in local parks.

Nature has restorative qualities that offer individuals a space for healing, learning, sharing and reflection. Tri-City Mental Health's Therapeutic Community Garden (TCG) provides free virtual groups where community members of all ages can gather, learn and grow. Individuals and families can engage in a range of activities to foster well-being and improve both gardening and coping skills, all while creating a sense of community in nature and social connection.

Gardening promotes health and wellness in a variety of ways, from being outdoors surrounded by plants to physical activity. "In our weekly virtual groups, we focus on mindfulness, stress management, meditation and therapeutic horticulture," said Sara Rodriguez, LMFT, Clinical Therapist for the Therapeutic Community Garden. "We also provide opportunities for harvest giveaways from our garden. Depending on what nature has to offer during the season, our participants can take home fruits, vegetables, herbs, seeds and even soil to help them start gardening at home." Growing food, connecting with the earth, and sharing the bounty with your neighbors and community can help you feel rooted, connected, and grateful.

"Nature acts as a mirror for our own lives," continued Rodriguez. "As we foster our resilience and growth as individuals, we get to witness the growth and changes in the seeds we nurture. As we experience loss, growth and change, the garden moves through similar phases of its own. Like us, nature is strong and it reminds us of our own strength and resiliency each time we enter the therapeutic space."

All virtual groups are free and open to the community. Please call the TCG team at (909) 623-6131 to sign-up for a group and for more information about the Therapeutic Community Garden.



nior year. (But we were a real whiz on our manual typewriter.) The show – with the audience socially distanced and wearing masks – got under way with a backdrop of the San Gabriel Mountains and a setting sun (with only an occasional interruption by one of those pesky motorcycles or a little Toyota with one of those mufflers that makes it sound like a rubber band – but even then, Maleyah, always the professional, just rolled with it).

And you know the line, “You had me at Hello?” (“Jerry Maguire,” Renee Zellweger and Tom Cruise) Well, Maleyah, a resident of Pomona, had the audience from her opening number, and it just got better from there.

She performed a spot-on rendition of Shoshana Bean’s (singer, songwriter, recording artist, on Broadway in the cast of “Hairspray” and “Wicked,” appeared inside the Fox Theater for The SAE in March of 2020 – read the La Nueva Voz review here on page 15: lanuevavoz.net/issues/200326-issue-march.pdf)

“She Used to be Mine.” And she kept cranking it up later in the 45-minute set (it wasn’t really the finale but more of a climax) with “New York, New York.” Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, it doesn’t matter – she matched it either way you’re keeping score.

Oh, and just for the record, she did give her audience a chance to catch their collective breath a bit in between some of those high-lights.

Something else Maleyah already has mastered is an ability to talk to her audience between songs – normal, natural conversation, like, “My mom really is the reason I’m up on this stage – she’s always been my biggest encour-

SAE live... from pg. 1

ager and I love her so much.” Of course, she said a few moments later that she loves connecting with people and loves connecting with characters, so perhaps it comes naturally, but we kind of doubt it – we believe performers need to develop that special skill as she clearly has done.

Maleyah thanked all of her mentors at SAE, including the school’s artistic director Phil Miller. “I met you in the seventh grade

and I was a nervous wreck,” she told Miller who was seated four rows back.

And she said she remembered
SAE live... pg. 19



Phil Miller



Maleyah Moses, at left, grabs the microphone as she sings with the accompaniment of pianist Patrick Copeland, head engineer of The SAE Studios, and Dominic Furiani, guitarist and a music instructor at The SAE Middle School.

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Bezos ex-wife MacKenzie Scott gives \$40 million to Cal Poly Pomona

Cal Poly University Pomona this month received a \$40 million gift, the largest individual donation in university history, from philanthropist and author MacKenzie Scott – an unrestricted donation that Cal Poly officials say represents a “transformational moment” for the school.

“Ms. Scott’s generosity will undoubtedly change many lives across Cal Poly Pomona, the region and beyond,” said Cal Poly President Dr. Soraya Coley. “We are very proud that Cal Poly Pomona is the number one polytechnic university in the nation in advancing student social mobility. This tremendous gift will play a vital role in sustaining and growing our unparalleled student success.”

The gift from the billionaire ex-wife of Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos will be used to support and expand student success programs, increase faculty diversity, support faculty well-being and enhance institutional innovation and excellence, according to a Cal Poly news release.

A portion also will be used to create a new endowed fund that will provide permanent and on-going support for future generations of Broncos.

According to Wikipedia, Scott has a net worth of \$57 billion, making her the third-wealthiest woman in the world and the 21st wealthiest individual overall.

She is a signatory to the “Giving Pledge.”

a commitment to give at least half of her wealth to charity.

Known for its tradition of hands-on education, Cal Poly University Pomona has approximately 29,000 students. About 57 percent are first-generation college students and 75 percent receive financial aid.

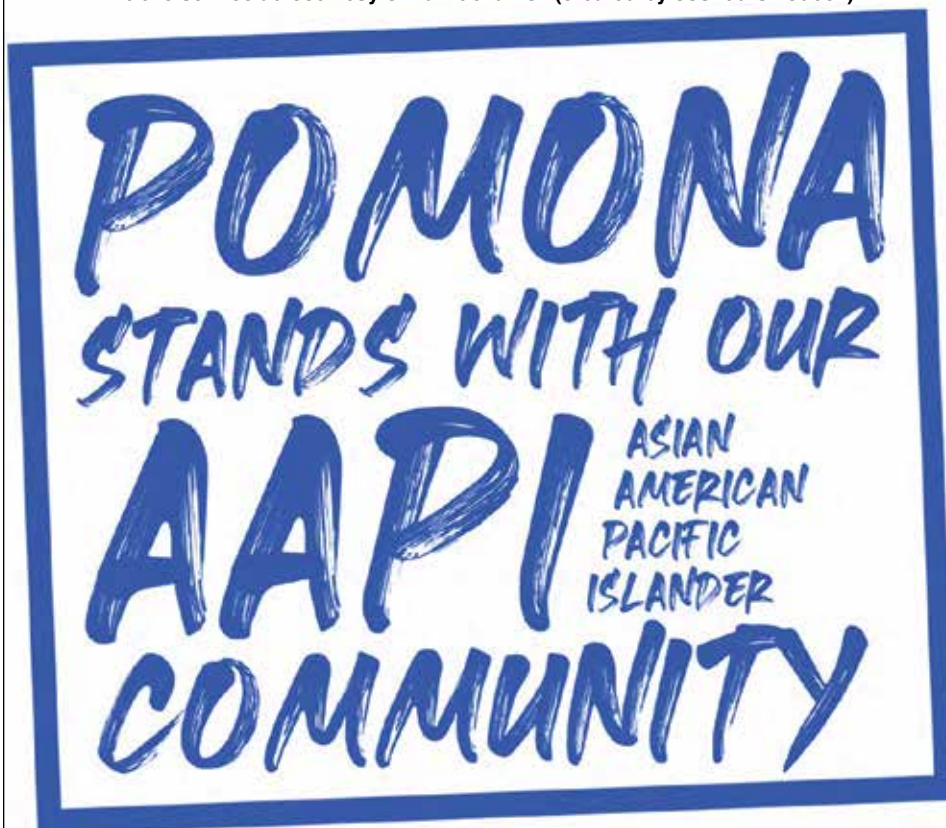
The university, which is part of the California State University system, is nationally recognized for quality, affordability and alumni outcomes.

The select institutions benefitting from Scott’s generosity are those making a major impact in empowering diverse communities, “supporting a vital variety of perspectives and experience in solutions on every cause,” Scott said in a recent news article. “These leaders and organizations have an effective track record of effective management and significant impact in their fields.”

“Higher education is a proven pathway to opportunity, so we looked for two- and four-year institutions successfully educating students who come from communities that have been chronically underserved,” she said.

Prior to this gift, the largest individual gift to the university was a \$10 million gift from Jim and Coral Collins. A \$42 million gift from The Kellogg Foundation to Cal Poly Pomona is the largest unrestricted gift given to a university in the Cal State system, according to the news release.

Public service ad courtesy of La Nueva Voz (created by Joshua Swodeck)



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Post 30 Commander says Memorial Day on COVID is different but ‘the memories and emotions . . . are always the same’

Pomona’s American Legion Post 30 Commander Roberto Arnold, acting as master of ceremonies at last month’s Memorial Day observance at Pomona Valley Memorial Park, said that “for the second year in a row Memorial Day looks a little different because of COVID.”

That, of course, was because Post 30 and the Pomona cemetery again joined forces for an observance without the Pomona Concert Band playing “old standard” military and patriotic songs and without bleachers in the veterans’ memorial section of the cemetery for the guests.

However, Arnold pointed out, “the memories and emotions that they bring are always the same – for the countless families across the nation, Memorial Day is a stark and often painful reminder of those who were never afforded the opportunity to be honored as veterans for their service to our country.”

“Their sacrifice is a true expression of selfless service,” Arnold said, regardless of whether they volunteered during a time of war, served during peacetime, or never

planned to serve until a draft card arrived.

“Too many mothers, fathers, siblings and children feel immense weight of seeing an empty chair year-round,” he added. “For them, Memorial Day brings to forefront what is always operating in the background.”

“This will be the 20th year we have been at war, longer than any American conflict that has come before it,” Arnold said. “About 2.7 million Americans have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and over half of them have deployed more than once. Those who returned are now our community members, neighbors and our friends.”

He spoke of their stories of service and sacrifice known only to those who have witnessed it first hand, and their accounts of he-



Russell Evans of the Pomona Eagles, at left, places a wreath of honor at Memorial Day services at Pomona Valley Memorial Park. Wreaths also were placed by Pomona’s American Legion Post 30 and Post 30’s American Legion Auxiliary.

roes who can no longer speak for themselves.

“It is up to us not to tell their stories but to honor their service and their memory by ensuring their families and survivors are cared for,” Arnold said.

Also participating was Congresswoman Norma Torres who



Members of the Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps of Lutheran High School in La Verne perform a flag ceremony with individual flags representing every branch of the military during last month’s Memorial Day observance at Pomona Valley Memorial Park. Recorded versions of the official songs of each branch played in the background.

said Memorial Day was commemorating “a sacrifice much, much greater than ourselves.”

“I’m honored to join families across the Inland Empire to say thank you, not just to our Gold Star families but all of their friends, everyone who has sacrificed so much for the freedoms

that we enjoy today and every single day,” Torres said. “And as a mother of an Air Force veteran, I know that there is nothing more important for our men and women in uniform than to know how much this sacrifice means to all of us.”

Memories and emotions... pg. 15

¿Está buscando comprar su primera casa?

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Pomona library back in business with first-ever entry facelift!

The Pomona Public Library reopened for business as usual this month with a little surprise for library patrons who haven't been paying close attention:

This is not your father's library anymore!

And that's really for two reasons – first, the entire lobby entrance, including flooring and circulation desk area, has been completely remodeled – for the first time since the library opened in the Pomona Civic Center location in 1965 – and second, there's an amazing new mural in the children's library that really makes it worth the trip into the library just to see that!

Pomona Public Library Foundation President Duane Smith served as master of ceremonies at a pre-opening "VIP preview" last month to show off the nearly completed project for a group of key supporters, members of the Pomona City Council, members of the Board of Library Trustees and members of the foundation board.

Smith told his guests it was not a finished product.

"But it's close to a finished product," he said, explaining that it all started when Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia – before she was elected to the council – served on the Board of Library Trustees where she talked about what would be needed to

make the library more friendly.

For one thing, Smith said, since the library first opened 56 years ago with the original "check out" desk, when people came into the library "the first thing the librarians saw of them was their back."

"So, greeting people was just not something that was possible," Smith added.

Fast forward to 2021 with a state grant, a little city money and funds from donors through the foundation, and voila! Problem solved. The new desk with its marble-like surface is turned around facing the entrance, and staff members actually get to sit down behind the desk while they are working.

"The Pomona Public Library Foundation set out to try to upgrade the library to make it modern, more user friendly, more staff friendly," Smith said.

And, while members of the audience

represented some of the library's biggest and most regular donors, Smith said the major funding for the project came from the state.

"We . . . were lucky that (state) Sen. Connie Leyva was able to get in last year's state budget a

grant that ultimately was from the state librarian for \$280,000," he said.

An additional \$55,000 from the foundation has gone into the project to date, he said.

The circulation desk itself was described by Deputy City Manager Mark Gluba (also the city's acting library director) as "custom fabricated wood with laminate and solid surface features."

And the new lobby floor-



Members of the Pomona Public Library staff were introduced at last month's pre-opening preview showcasing the upgrades to the circulation desk area. Pictured, from left, are Crystal Orosco, children's librarian; Estela Davila, loan service circulation supervisor; Anita Torres, library services manager; and Pomona Deputy City Manager Mark Gluba, acting library director.



Pomona Public Library Foundation President Duane Smith, at left, chats with library supporters at last month's pre-opening 'VIP preview' at the library. Pictured, from left, are Smith, Bob Cruz of the Southern California Gas Company, his wife, Sylvia Cruz, and Cal Poly University Pomona President Dr. Soraya Coley.

ing is a grey wood grain luxury vinyl tile.

Interestingly, the timing of the pandemic actually helped with the timing of the library upgrade, since the library was already closed to the public during con-

struction (the library has been operating using a "walk up doorside service" during the pandemic in order to continue providing the basics).

Smith mentioned several key donors at the event

including Pomona realtor Mark Warren, Southern California Gas Company's Bob Cruz, Cal Poly University Pomona President Dr. Soraya Coley and even La Nueva Voz.

And, he added, Sen. Leyva plans to contribute some of her own money in a second round of funding.

An important part of that second round will be linked to Saturday's virtual "Mayor's Gala," presented by the foundation (tickets available online at pomonalibraryfoundation.org/virtual-gala).

Gluba introduced Library Services Manager Anita Torres who, he said, "has become a leader during one of the most challenging times (because of the pandemic closure) and we've accomplished a lot of great things without her even having the opportunity to run



Duane Smith, President, Pomona Public Library Foundation, describes changes to the library lobby at last month's pre-opening 'VIP preview.'

a normal library yet."

Torres, who said she looks forward to seeing the bottom half of everyone's face, said the library improvements will "boost morale and cause excitement for the whole city and in different departments within the city."

"Libraries are still very relevant no matter what you might hear," she said.

Torres has worked in libraries for more than 20 years.

Guests had an opportunity to view the new children's mural (funded by the city's public art receipts and not by the foundation) and the artist was on hand to answer questions.

The Pomona Public Library maintains a circulating book collection of more than 300,000 volumes, newspapers and magazines,

Back in business... pg. 6

Pomona library children's section showcases new mural

Next time you have a minute, you've got to stop by the children's section of the Pomona Public Library to see a new mural that, well, kind of just sets the tone for everything that happens in a library and, generally, depicts a representation of everybody who goes there.

Artist Athena Hahn was commissioned for the job by the city's Cultural Arts Commission allocating resources available in the city's "in lieu fee fund."

Short version? The Pomona City Council established the "Art in Public Places Program" in 2011 requiring developers of qualifying buildings to either provide public art on site or contribute to an in-lieu fee fund toward the installation of public art elsewhere in the city.

The mural itself, which pretty much covers the entire west wall of the children's section, includes everything from the children in the library and the books in the children's area to the San Gabriel Mountains in the background – teaching lessons in both diversity and the value of reading.

It even has a few butterflies and a selection of local wild animals tossed in for good measure. (She said she used young animals because "I didn't want it to be scary for the kids.")

Oh, and those children are "real" children of the library – Hahn followed children around in the library, and actually got permission from their parents to use their likeness in the mural.

New mural... pg. 6



Athena Hahn
Library mural artist

'Team Hope' officials hold job fair to fill positions at Fairplex 'intake site'

Officials with "Team Hope," operators of the temporary intake site at Pomona's Fairplex for unaccompanied minors seeking refuge in the United States, held their first job fair to help fill positions to support the kids last week on a day the facility was caring for 750 children – the most since the first group of kids arrived on May 1.

And a Team Hope spokesperson said the operation already has reunited more than 700 children just in the first six weeks of the effort.

Neil Nowlin, a public affairs representative for Cherokee Federal, chief contractor for the project, said the job fair in Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel – which he said is part of what will become a continuing effort – was designed to eventually place hundreds of qualified candidates in jobs at the intake center.

Day one was last Thursday, and a follow-up event was held on Saturday.

"There are a number of open positions – youth care workers, case managers, administrative positions, and today's really one step," Nowlin said. "More kids are coming. We are going to continue to expand our capacity at the shelter, and so today's a good opportunity for us to talk to a lot of talented people and try to find roles for them and make them part of our team."

"Potentially, there could be hundreds of jobs," he added. "Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but as . . . we staff up and expand preparing for more kids."

And many of those jobs are being filled with area residents in and around Pomona.

"I think right now we're probably 90 to 95 percent local," Nowlin said. "These are people that live here, work here, make their homes here, and I think that's one of the great stories about this shelter, that we've been embraced by the community."

"It's been a real coming together of a bunch of different entities and partners, and so the policy is as much as we can, try to find people that are local to the community," he said.

Then how was the turnout?

The first day of the job fair got under way at 4 p.m. and continued until 8 p.m.

Nowlin said that as of the morning of event, about 250 had registered to attend.

"RSVP wasn't necessary to take part in the job fair, but that was a great sign that there was a lot of interest, and I've seen at least 150 or 200 people, I would say, in the first hour and a half," he said.

Team Hope's impressive track record

Nowlin also commented on Team Hope's primary mission of reuniting children with parents, sponsors, and relatives – and placing those 700 just in the first six weeks, calling it "a great feeling."

"That's what we're here to do," he said. "They (the kids) spend about two weeks with us and during that time, it's education, recreation, case management, access to pro bono lawyers, but really focused on keeping them safe and getting them into the hands of parents and loved ones as quickly as possible."

Nowlin also pointed out that similar shelters in Long Beach and San Diego will be closing soon and either have stopped or will soon stop taking new admissions of kids crossing the border.

Because of that, he said numbers in Pomona are expected to continue to pick up in the weeks ahead.

The Pomona facility can handle a maximum of 2,500 children.

La Nueva Voz asked Nowlin how the kids are doing during their time at the shelter.

"The kids are great," he said. "We have tours regularly – (Los Angeles County) Supervisor (Hilda) Solis comes on a regular basis, Rep. (Norma) Torres comes on a regular basis, we host members of the state assembly, the Mayor of Pomona comes through, and I think what strikes them the most is the facility just sets up so well for the kids."

"There's a lot of outdoor time, time for soccer, a lot of open space so they can run and play," he added. "So, for those that walk through, they're left with the impression of 'hey, kids are smiling, they're happy, they're safe,



JOB FAIR AT FAIRPLEX -- Case management workers at the Alma Family Services booth were accepting job applications on the spot last week at a job fair at Pomona's Sheraton Fairplex Hotel to hire support staff to work with the unaccompanied minors staying at the temporary intake site on the Fairplex campus. The children are seeking refuge in the United States and are being housed here until they can be reunited with family or placed in foster care.

they're getting good food to eat and being well taken care of under difficult circumstances."

"This is not the ideal place for anyone, much less a child," Nowlin said, "but we try to make it as comfortable and as safe as possible in that very short time that they're with us so that they can feel safe and secure and be set up for success when they start their new life with a family or a sponsor."

The intake site, set up on a large portion of the sprawling Fairplex campus, has been described as a comfortable and nurturing emergency facility for youth seeking refuge in the United States from countries south of the border.

It was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and its Office of Refugee Resettlement and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency with the support of Los Angeles County and an entire list of community partners, all under the direction of Bonnie Preston, acting director of Region 9 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services based in San Francisco.

An initial contract with Fairplex is renewable until the end of the year and provides for children living on cots on carpeted floors of select exhibition halls at Fair-

plex while waiting to be reunited with family members in the U.S. or referred to foster care agencies for placement.

The plan was announced by Supervisor Solis in an April 9 news conference outlining arrangements of the plan developed in response to a request from the White House.

According to Congresswoman Norma Torres, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement is operating more than 200 similar facilities in 22 states with some 22,500 children in their custody.

Interested in donating to support the children? Contributions may be made to the Esperanza Fund by visiting www.pomonacommunityfoundation.org.

Additional information on the Esperanza Fund and its activities is available on the Fairplex web site at www.fairplex.com.

New mural... from pg. 5

"They are real children from the Pomona community," she said. "I used the demographics from Pomona Unified School District to base the numbers on."

Hahn told La Nueva Voz her color "palette" started with the colors on a circular activity table in the center of the children's area.

"But I wanted to increase the range because children actually do learn colors at a young age and you want to expose them to as many as possible," she said.

"I wanted to give them sort of a window into their own imagination and to bring the outside in," Hahn said.

Even the books are real books.

"If you look closely ... it goes throughout time," she said, referring to the various books depicted in the mural that were popular at different times.

If this is starting to sound like Hahn is the real deal, that is because she is – she grew up in Pomona and then Claremont and graduated from Pitzer College in

Claremont.

And she actually was a patron of the Pomona Public Library when she was a little girl.

Plus here's an added bonus – her sister teaches early childhood education, so she enlisted her sister's help in selecting books based on diversity and authors to better include authentically representative books in the mural.

Back in business... from pg. 5

adult reference and information services, internet access, audiovisual materials and a variety of programs for patrons of all ages.

All in all, that doesn't seem too bad for a library that opened at its first location at Third and Main Streets in 1887 with only 400 books.

The library moved into the Union Block building at Second and Thomas Streets in 1892, and into the Carnegie Building at 380 N. Main St. in 1903.

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Pomona Youth Prevention Council ‘advocates’ receive end of year awards at first ‘in person’ event since COVID closure

Eight youth award winners and four youth advocates were recognized with end of the year honors this month for their involvement with Pomona Youth Prevention Council, a group that organizes youth around prevention projects that address their concerns about their community.

Youth winners were announced in awards ceremonies in the Stan Selby Bandshell in Pomona’s Ganesha Park – the group’s first “in person” event since the pandemic closures.

The purpose of the event was to celebrate all the accomplishments of the youth advocates despite challenges faced during COVID-19 and to acknowledge their resiliency and commitment to the youth coalition and advocacy efforts in Pomona.

Program moderator Rebecca Soon called all of the kids “amazing and creative,” adding that the awards event was “celebrating the bond that we have created here and celebrating everything that we’ve learned.”

Award recipients were chosen by the youth members themselves.

Projects the group worked on during the year ranged from fun crafts to citywide projects, membership campaigns, fundraising, and social media.

“We are always blown away by these students – they are really empathetic, they are really compassionate, and they are very passionate about their city,” Soon said. “They are passionate about the people around them, they are called youth advocates for a reason, and they take that with pride.”

Youth awards were presented to Fatima Reyes-Rios and Yeily Pedroza for “fun friends;” Roxy Padilla for “most inspirational;” Yeily Pedroza for “most engaged;” and Roxy Padilla for “most likely

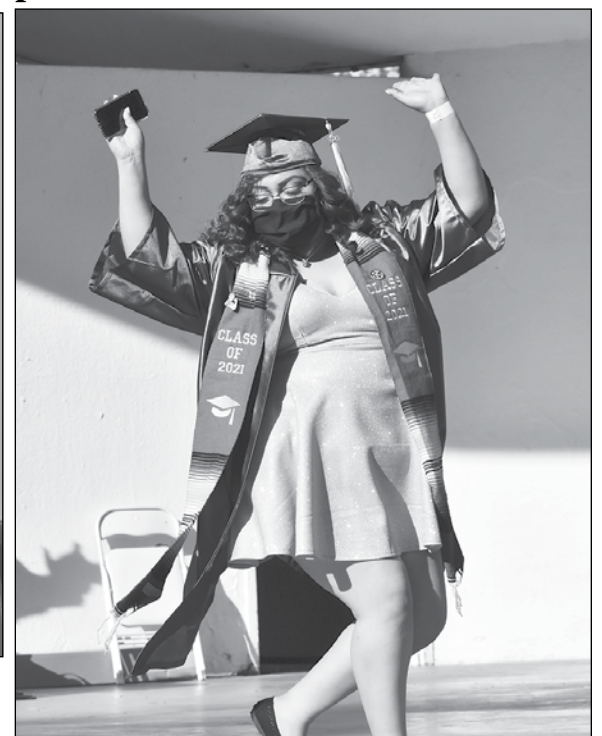
to be on phone.”

Awards for “most impactful committee member” went to Marlene Soto-Serna (membership); Ashley Torres (fundraiser); Evelyn Aguilar-Andrade (activities); and Nathan Gonzalez (social media).

Facilitators receiving awards were Renee Arroyo (awards for



Masters of ceremonies Gloria Andino, at left, and Rebecca Soon moderated this month’s awards presentation for youth advocates with the Pomona Youth Prevention Council held in Pomona’s Ganesha Park bandshell.



Evelyn Aguilar-Andrade, still wearing her high school graduation cap and gown, walks the red carpet to receive her award for “Most Impactful Activities Committee Member” at this month’s Pomona Youth Prevention Council awards presentation.

“Best DJ” and “Extra Mile”), of Project Sister Family Services; Rebecca Soon (award for “Most Inspirational”), also of Project Sister; and Joseph McLellan (award for “Extra Mile”), of Prototypes.

Program facilitators are affiliat-

ed with one of the four organizations that support Pomona Youth Prevention Council. In addition to Project Sister and Prototypes (an organization working to rebuild the lives of women, children and

Prevention Council... pg. 16

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Marine remembers Vietnam... from pg. 1

vicemen Statue,” by artist Frederick Hart, also part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, to close with a Native American prayer, using an eagle’s wing and burning sage, “blessing those who have fallen for our country.”

His friend Richard, according to Bulldog, lost both legs in Vietnam. Richard was there for his first tour of duty in 1959 and went back in 1968 when he lost his legs.

The two also were invited to go to Arlington National Cemetery for the laying of the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall were held in the afternoon.

Bulldog is involved in many regional veteran-related projects – he’s working on upgrading Vietnam memorials throughout California – including one at Cesar Chavez Avenue and Soto Street in Boyle Heights, he is commander of the American G.I. Forum in Pomona, a Congressionally chartered Hispanic veterans and civil rights organization, and he is part of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Native American tribe, headquartered in Pomona, where he works closely with Chairman Tony Cerda.

“I honor all of us veterans that served and that we have to honor,” he told La Nueva Voz.

And for the last 20 years, Bulldog has been working to bring home MIA’s (missing in action in the armed services) from both World War II and Vietnam, working with their families on arrangements.

Once he was able to help out with remains of a veteran discovered in Pearl Harbor in Honolulu. Recently he has been working with the Second Marine Division bringing home remains found in the South Pacific – some found in a punch bowl.

“Our country has not forgotten those that were left there when the war ended and we’re bringing them home, one by one, and trying our best so that that ‘patch of grass’ (grave) that is promised to our soldiers for serving our country (becomes a reality),” Bulldog said.

And speaking of his friend Richard, he said he honors Richard “because he served our nation five years before I got there – I took over his watch.”

And on his trip to Washington with Richard?

“To me, honoring Richard serving before me, to me that was the greatest gift I could have as a veteran and also a Marine and a brother of our nation,” Bulldog said. “And to me, that means a whole lot to me because we have

He also has worked with homeless veterans on the street.

Bulldog lived in Pomona from 1990 until 2013 (he said he still owns a house in Phillips Ranch and receives his mail there), although currently he is living in Ontario.

Meanwhile, Alice Varela,



BURNING SAGE TO BLESS THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN -- Marine Vietnam Veteran Jesse “Bulldog” Gonzales, long active in veterans circles in and around Pomona, traveled with his friend Richard Gonzalez, also a Marine and also a Vietnam veteran, to Washington, D.C., to participate in Memorial Day ceremonies last month. Pictured is Gonzales in front of “The Three Servicemen Statue” where he closed the ceremonies with a Native American prayer, using an eagle’s wing and burning sage.

to honor those who went before us no matter what time – World War I, World War II, Korea, Desert Storm – they went before us, we have to honor those guys.”

Richard is now 81 years old and Bulldog is 73.

Bulldog works on various veterans-related projects with elected officials, from Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval to Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis. To date, he said, he has helped families bury more than 400 veterans, most recently involving one whose 90-year-old sister in Montebello helped bring her brother home.

Bulldog often receives something containing DNA and then is able to work with the FBI to help locate family members.

He served for 22 years in the U.S. Marines, followed by another 12 years with the U.S. Department of Justice helping protect individuals turning over evidence in criminal cases.

And he even worked in private security in Mexico for three years.

He was part owner for 14 years of the former Kaiser Bill’s Military Emporium surplus store on Second Street in Downtown Pomona.

founder and director of the non-profit “Support Kids in Progress,” a non-profit organization Bulldog is involved in, was working with Bulldog to resolve problems during the journey – the wheelchair incident with Delta, and Americans with Disabilities Act issues at both the Watergate Hotel and handicapped access issues involving the airplane rest room on the flight back.

But Bulldog brought back memories. For example, he and Richard visited the Iwo Jima landmark Marine Corps War Memorial near Arlington where a brigadier general – at the memorial for another ceremony – spotted Richard in his wheelchair, walked over and thanked him for his service in Vietnam.

In return, Bulldog and Richard presented the general with a Native American “Warrior’s Medal of Valor.”

Moments later, a large group of Vietnamese visitors walked by and several approached Richard and thanked him for his service.

Editor’s note: La Nueva Voz was honored to be able to help with one small part of this memorial journey – getting the two veterans and a motorized wheelchair

out to Ontario International Airport for the flight. La Nueva Voz assisted in researching a special shuttle – and in partially sponsoring the shuttle round-trip fare – for this leg of the journey that started at 5 a.m. that Sunday morning so they could catch their airplane. La Nueva Voz would like to thank Bulldog and Richard for making this “pilgrimage” to Washington, D.C., and for sharing their story with this newspaper. Interested in the story? “Bulldog” Gonzales is tentatively scheduled to appear as a special guest speaker – telling this story and more – at next year’s Memorial Day ceremony at Pomona Valley Memorial Park.

La Nueva Voz was honored to be able to make this suggestion to both Bulldog and cemetery officials. Our thanks to La Nueva Voz friend Ed Samaniego for the news “tip” on this “local veteran receives national honor to speak in Washington” story. Ed and his family recently published the personal journal of his late father, Army Capt. George Samaniego, “Journal of a Soul,” recounting the Pomona resident’s service in the Korean War. The book was reviewed in the November 2020 La Nueva Voz, which is available online at lanuevavoz.net/issues/201126-issue-november.pdf.



PAYING THEIR RESPECTS -- Jesse “Bulldog” Gonzales, left, and Richard Gonzalez salute during Memorial Day ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. Gonzales was invited to speak at the event and took with him his good friend Richard Gonzalez. Both served in the Vietnam War in the U.S. Marine Corps.

La Nueva Voz

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Photo courtesy of Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez

LUNCH IS ON FREDDIE -- Lunch was on Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez last month at a special "EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Lunch" at Tony's Famous French Dips in Pomona. Rodriguez spent time sitting down for a sandwich talking to and listening to the concerns of Pomona-area firefighters from the Los Angeles County Fire Department, police officers from the Pomona Police Department and local paramedics. Pictured is Rodriguez presenting a special certificate to a group of paramedics outside the restaurant. Rodriguez wanted to show his appreciation for the work of first responders in honor of EMS week.

Pomona Hospital offers new 'Post-COVID recovery long haulers' program

Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center is offering a new comprehensive "Post-COVID Recovery" program designed to help COVID-19 "long haulers," or those who have had COVID and are now finding their symptoms related to the virus are continuing for many months.

Typical symptoms include shortness of breath, persistent fatigue, cognitive "brain fog" issues, difficulty eating and drinking, speech and language problems, cardiac issues plus the anxiety or depression that can be associated with such a lengthy recovery.

Tammy Magill, RRT, the hospital's pulmonary rehabilitation certified respiratory therapist, leads a highly skilled multidisciplinary therapy team of specialists who carefully evaluate symptoms, test each patient's underlying physiologic impairments, and individualize a treatment plan based on the findings.

She said the goal is to help patients recover from the continuing effects of the disease through spe-

cialized therapies and progressive exercise programs designed to improve lingering symptoms and restore functional independence as quickly and safely as possible.

"Interestingly, many of our Post-COVID Recovery patients were not necessarily the most ill, or those hospitalized the longest," Magill said. "They managed their initial symptoms at home and either never got over them completely or got over them originally and symptoms returned months later."

The hospital has provided rehabilitation treatments to more than 1,000 patients suffering from "long-hauler" symptoms which include short- and long-term difficulties in areas including decreased lung function, general weakness, loss of mobility, loss of balance, muscle aches, irregular heart rate response, swallowing and more.

Magill said patients who have completed the program say they are happy to be getting "back to normal" and report positive out-

Recovery program... pg. 16



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Local Red Cross issues reminder on preventing home fires

Officials with the American Red Cross Los Angeles Region – after San Gabriel-Pomona Valley Chapter volunteers this month helped 157 residents impacted by a mobile home park fire in Rosemead – issued a reminder on how to prevent home fires which, they said, account for 90 percent of all disaster responses.

Pomona’s ‘Sustainable Together’ non-profit to open ‘affordable and healthy’ neighborhood market, launch nutritional education program

“Sustainable Together,” a Pomona-based non-profit group of self-motivated individuals who share a passion for making the community sustainable, is working on final plans for its first major project, “Project Green Plate,” which will establish an affordable and healthy neighborhood market scheduled to open in August.

“With this, we will tackle the food insecurity that Pomona’s food desert communities face,” said Isela King, a spokesperson for the group. “Additionally, we will provide a lifestyle education component to the public as part of this initiative.”

“Sustainable Together hopes to grow the City of Pomona’s infrastructure to provide every individual access to basic human needs,” she added. “We want to provide each person with the opportunity to thrive.”

“Through working with local organizations, we hope to create a sustainable change that will continue for generations to come,” she said.

King said the group also is developing a nutritional education program that it hopes to roll out to the community and to the classrooms of Pomona Unified School District.

Members also work with the Pomona Community Farmer Alliance, which operates the Pomona Valley Certified Farmers Market every Saturday and will have its own booth there the third Saturday of each month beginning on July 17.

The farmers market itself is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday just north of Downtown Pomona at Garey Avenue and Pearl Street.

For more information, visit the web site at www.sustainableforall.org.

“We want everyone to be safe with working smoke alarms,” a spokesperson said, “which can cut the risk of dying in a home fire by half.”

The Red Cross listed the following tips:

1. Test your smoke alarms each month and practice your escape plan until everyone can get out

in less than two minutes – the amount of time you may have to get out of a burning home before it is too late.

2. In your escape plan, include at least two ways to exit every room in your home. Select a meeting spot a safe distance away from your home where everyone knows to meet.

3. While practicing your escape plan, teach children what a smoke alarm sounds like. Talk about fire safety and what to do in an emergency.

4. Place smoke alarms on each level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas. Change the batteries at least once a year.

5. Check the manufacturer’s date of your smoke alarms. If they are 10 years old or older, they likely need to be replaced. Follow your alarm’s manufacturer instructions.

In this month’s Rosemead response, the Red Cross Disaster Action Team coordinated emer-

Preventing home fires... pg. 16



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UNA NOTA DE LA DOCTORA SOBRE LAS VACUNAS

Dra. Eloisa González, Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de Los Angeles

1. ¿Cuál es la probabilidad de que la vacuna resulte en efectos secundarios que afecten en mi salud a largo plazo?

Después de recibir la vacuna contra COVID-19, es posible que sienta algunos efectos secundarios leves, como sentiría después de vacunarse contra la gripe. Algunos de los efectos secundarios más comunes incluyen dolor en el brazo, fiebre leve o dolor de cabeza. Pero estos síntomas desaparecerán después de 24 horas – y si los siente, no se preocupe. Esta es la forma en que su cuerpo le dice que está desarrollando inmunidad para protegerlo contra COVID-19. No se conocen efectos negativos a largo plazo de la vacuna. Sabemos que la vacuna lo protegerá para que no se enferme gravemente, necesite hospitalización o algo peor.



Dr. Eloisa Gonzalez
 Los Angeles County
 Department of Health Services

2. ¿Cómo sé si mis vacunas me protegerán de variantes nuevas que empiezan a circular y que pueden ser más infecciosas y peligrosas?

Los científicos están trabajando día y noche para comprobar que las vacunas contra COVID-19 también protegen contra las variantes nuevas que pueden ser más infecciosas o peligrosas. Hasta ahora, las tres vacunas han demostrado ser efectivas contra las variantes, y mantendrán a usted y a sus seres queridos seguros y protegidos del virus.

3. ¿Necesitaré recibir una vacuna de refuerzo y, si tendré que hacer eso, cuántos meses después de haberme vacunado completamente?

Todavía no se sabe si necesitaremos vacunas de refuerzo o vacunas anuales. Los científicos están estudiando esto presentemente.

4. ¿Qué deben saber los padres sobre las vacunas para menores de 16 años?

Si queremos proteger a todos nuestros seres queridos de este virus mortal, todos debemos vacunarnos. Las vacunas contra COVID-19, como otras vacunas que reciben sus hijos, son seguras y efectivas y nos ayudan a erradicar enfermedades en nuestra comunidad. Recuerde que solo la vacuna Pfizer está disponible para aquellos que tienen entre 12 y 17 años.

Para hacer tu cita de vacunación, visita: www.VacunateLosAngeles.com



Photo by Renee Barbee

Pictured is an “artsy” (hey, we thought it was) sunset photo shot through a pine tree hanging over the backyard in Westmont.

Bummed about no LA County Fair again this year?

The Fair’s permanently moving to May beginning in 2022!

After nearly 100 years of holding the LA County Fair in September, the event is permanently moving its dates to May beginning in 2022 in time for the celebration of its centennial.

Next year’s Fair will run Thursdays through Sundays plus Memorial Day, May 5 through May 30, 2022, according to a Fairplex announcement.

Fairgoers will be able to experience the Fair of the past, present and future as the LA County Fair celebrates the very first Fair held in 1922.

From remembering the Fair’s early days of tent expositions to the introduction of

midcentury inventions like the Frisbee to the “home of the future,” the 2022 Fair will embody nostalgia, warmth, and good old-fashioned Fair fun.

Hours, pricing, exhibits, competitions and more will be available in coming months at lacountyfair.com.

According to the announcement, while the “large-scale” Fair was canceled for both 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, Fairplex is making plans to host a “Fair Food” experience in late September.

For those who purchased a 2020 Fair Season Pass Box and held it for the 2021 Fair, refunds will be issued by July 16.

Pomona non-profit ‘Choices’ offers confidential services, information on options to women who may be pregnant

Free and confidential pregnancy services, how to handle pressure to have an abortion, post-abortion and sexual abuse support and even information about the father’s rights and responsibilities all are available from Pomona’s Choices Women’s Resource Center.

According to information provided by Choices, forced abortion is illegal in the U.S. – whether parents or guardians forcing a minor to abort, the father of the baby forcing the mother to abort, or victims of human trafficking being forced by a pimp to abort.

Then what about the father?

According to Choices, for example, the father’s name does not have to be on the birth certificate. The mother usually has the option of putting “unknown” or “refused to state.”

However, in order to receive public as-

sistance, the mother may be required to provide authorities with the name of the father and his last known address, since authorities may seek to be reimbursed by the father for child support paid to the mother by the state.

And if the father is abusive or a drug addict, the key question the court will ask is “What is in the best interest of the child?”

If a parent is abusive or incapable of taking care of the child because of drug or alcohol abuse, or cannot provide a safe environment for the child, the courts will take that into consideration when making visitation decisions.

Choices offers free and confidential healing support including post-abortion support and healing class and sexual abuse recovery class.

A wide range of services includes every-

Choices... pg. 18

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Graduation time... from pg. 1

in a huge parking lot at Fairplex (reported in last month's issue of this newspaper).

But it was at last month's "socially distanced" 14th annual commencement ceremonies for Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise that valedictorian Karina (Xin) Fang, a senior visual arts major, told her fellow graduating classmates to "always, always remember that the opportunity to achieve greatness is within our grasp."

Sound very similar to graduation speeches everywhere? Perhaps. But this class valedictorian was very different – she moved to Pomona with her mother three years ago – from Shenyang, China! – to a new home in Downtown Pomona's arts colony just to attend school at The SAE.

Then was it worth the trip?

Seems like it – her next stop in her educational journey will be attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, according to a spokesperson for The SAE.

Fang told her classmates they were here during COVID, the Black Lives Matter protests and more.

"And despite all the odds, we still managed to graduate," she said, adding that they all arrived at The SAE "trying to seek opportunities to accomplish our dreams" – coming from different cities and even different countries.

"In SAE, we learned how to allot our creativity excellence, build up our determination, turn ourselves into a business and, last but not least, we realize that we are the most attractive class ever," she said, receiving a response from the audience.

"At the end of our careers as students, we have an opportunity – now is the time to take on the world and find and pursue our passion – to, quote unquote, leave a legacy," she added. "In life we can't always count on being born great or having greatness thrust upon us."

"Despite the failures and mistakes you will make . . . we find out that the average can achieve greatness whether recognized by the world or just a few," she said.

"If there's anything you take home today, remember to leave a legacy and to achieve greatness



– it's not to have money or recognition, it's to leave those with whom you cross a path a little more happiness and hope," she said. "When you want change, I hope you are the change."

The SAE ceremony, produced by the school's artistic director Phil Miller, also was the hands down winner in the "Best Pro-

Graduation time... pg. 17



Graduating seniors from The SAE walked across an actual stage this year to receive their diplomas -- with parents and friends seated but socially distanced in the audience in a parking lot in Downtown Pomona.

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Memories and emotions... from pg. 4

“This day is dedicated to the heroes who have laid down their lives on behalf of our nation and the Gold Star families that carry on despite their unspeakable pain of having lost a loved one,” she added. “Today we honor them and the communities that they have left behind, and we all owe the fallen and their loved ones that they leave behind a debt of gratitude.”

“The fact is that we will never be able to pay them for their selfless devotion,” Torres said. “To those remembering a family member today, we grieve with you, we

stand with you and we will always remain by your side.”

“Every day our country is safe, and our children breathe free, it is because of our service members and veterans that have made it possible,” she said.

Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole said the Memorial Day observance was “to honor the fallen and our veterans who are here today.”

“We all need to remember that we are honoring those who have served who have sacrificed,” Cole added as she told guests she had seven uncles serving in the armed

forces in every branch.

Every one came back except Jesse Ontiveros who was brought back at the age of 20, she said. And she mentioned he was buried in a grave only a few feet from the ceremony.

She also said she lost friends from Garey High School who served in Vietnam.

“This is what we need to remember,” she said. “They were people that we knew, that we loved, and we are here now to respect and honor and remember them always.”

Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres said that as councilman, he has an opportunity to advocate for issues he believes are important to the community.

“I would not be able to be here casting my vote every four years for the person that I believe to represent me, I wouldn’t be able to run for office if it wasn’t for the veterans who fought for the freedom,” he said. “Our veterans

have fought for our right to vote, have fought for our safety, and

Memories and emotions... pg. 19



Congresswoman Norma Torres



Pomona's American Legion Post 30 Second Vice Commander Bob Radcliff, at right, plays "Taps" on the bugle at the conclusion of last month's Memorial Day observance at Pomona Valley Memorial Park.



Students in the Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps of Lutheran High School in La Verne execute a memorial firing squad salute.



Pomona's American Legion Post 30 Second Vice Commander Bob Radcliff, also coordinator of the Post 30 color guard, oversees the ceremonial lowering of the American flag and raising it to half-staff during Memorial Day ceremonies at Pomona Valley Memorial Park. Pictured, from left, are Grace King, of Lutheran High School's Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps; Jack Peterson, member of Post 30's honor guard and color guard; Bob Radcliff; and Madison Bauer, also of Lutheran High School's Naval JROTC.



Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres



Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole



Roberto Arnold, Commander American Legion Post 30

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Prevention Council... from pg. 7

communities impacted by substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence), both the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of East San Gabriel and Pomona Valley, and Partnership for a Positive Pomona support the youth council.

The Pomona Youth Prevention Council is the youth action council of Partnership for a Positive Pomona, a coalition of Pomona residents and community leaders working together to prevent substance abuse in the community.



Nathan Gonzalez walks up to accept his award for "Most Impactful Social Media Committee Member" at the Pomona Youth Prevention Council awards in Ganesha Park.

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Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise, Claremont High School are local recipients of state 'arts education' award

A total of 33 schools throughout California – including locally only Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise and Claremont High School – have been selected for the 2021 California Exemplary Arts Education Award according to a recent news release from State Supt. of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

The selected schools engage students in quality arts education that meet California Arts Standards for Public Schools and demonstrate progress on indicators on the "California School Dashboard," the release stated.

The awards are designed to celebrate successful efforts to engage students in arts through exposure to a variety of disciplines.

"This year has been especially challenging for our students and schools, but I commend these schools for recognizing that this is a time when the arts are more critical than ever," Thurmond said. "These schools excelled in providing quality arts education, despite all the obstacles presented by distance learning."

"It is with great pleasure we honor these schools for their steadfast dedication to arts education that plays a powerful role in supporting wellness, bridging social divides, and expanding creativity and critical thinking in our students," he added.

According to the release, schools recognized as awardees represent a broad cross-section of educational delivery models, including comprehensive elementary schools, magnet schools, and district and independent charters.

Winners serve diverse demographic populations of varying sizes – from a 2,700-student urban school to a 250-student rural school.

Some schools serve primarily Title I students from lower socio-economic circumstances, and others serve suburban populations with strong district and community financial support.

In addition to meeting the criteria, schools receiving the award must offer sequenced instruction to all students in a

Arts education award... pg. 18

Recovery program... from pg. 9

comes such as better breathing, improved oxygen levels, reduced anxiety levels, less fatigue, longer walk times and returning to work.

For more information, contact the Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center Post-COVID Recovery outpatient program.

Referrals can be made in the following ways:

From the hospital – Individuals who have been hospitalized at the hospital due to COVID-19 can transition directly from inpa-

tient to outpatient Post-COVID Recovery through the doctor's discharge orders.

From the community – Individuals who received a past positive test for COVID-19 and who are no longer positive but are still experiencing symptoms or complications can access the program by obtaining a referral from their physician.

Patients who were hospitalized as well as those who had milder cases and were able to recover at home both are eligible.

For appointments, call (909) 865-9810.

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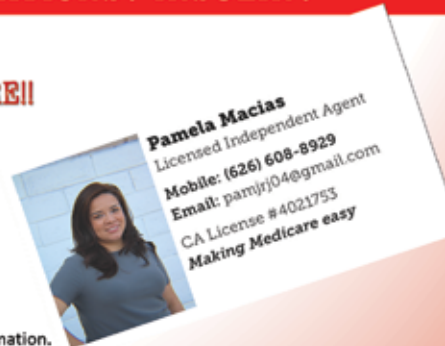
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Preventing home fires... from pg. 11

gency aid for the residents, which included financial assistance for lodging and food, and one-on-one support and recovery assistance.

"We normally respond to one, maybe two home fires in a single day but (on June 15) we had 36 homes affected," said Jennifer Dutton, disaster program specialist. "This was a big home fire response, and we had 12 responders from the region immediately jump in to lend a hand."

Local Red Cross volunteers have responded to 185 home fires in Los Angeles – helping more than 1,200 residents – since the beginning of 2021.

To donate to the Red Cross or to become a volunteer, visit the web site at redcross.org/donate or redcross.org/volunteer.

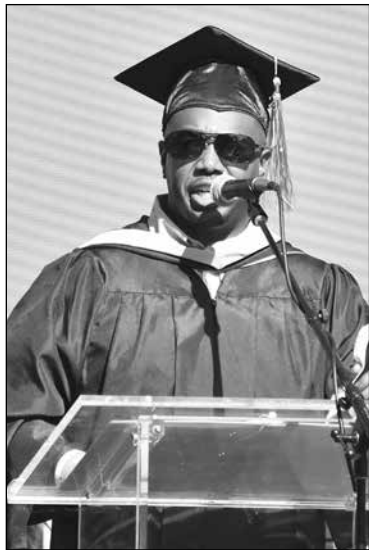
Graduation time... from pg. 14

duction Value in a High School Graduation Ceremony” competition this year with an almost Broadway-quality exhibition of showmanship on an outdoor stage in a parking lot behind Pomona’s American Museum of Ceramic Art.

Performances of music and dance entertained not only the graduates and their families but attracted a good-sized audience of passers-by who just came up to the portable fencing to see the show.

The SAE co-founder Ed Tessier

Pomona business leader Ed



Johnny Anderson
SAE Principal



SAE Executive Director Jon Gundry, at right, presents the Class of 2021 to SAE School Board member Joshua Swodeck.

Tessier, co-founder of The SAE and president of Friends of the SAE, told students the idea for the school came together 20 years ago.

He recounted the story of an exciting idea “of passion that drove the dreams of parents and teachers and universities that

launched The SAE with the highest expectations for the potential to transform our community and transform the lives of students like yourself.”

“So it’s all the more remarkable that under pressure and under so much change this year that you met and exceeded the highest hope of that dream that brought together the founders of The SAE,” he said, adding that they were inspiring teachers, their parents and their fellow students.

“But today I also want to thank you for making the community’s 20-year-old dream come true,” Tessier said. “You will write beautiful music, start successful companies, deliver moving performances, you will change things for the better wherever you go because you did that right here in our hometown.”

“I think all you need to succeed from here on out is to remember what you learned here at The SAE . . . find ways to work together, find ways to be kind, find where you are needed the most and dive in,” he said. “You’re an inspiration to us. You helped us get up every day and come to school and work hard. That doesn’t change from now on – it only grows.”

Village Academy High School

Later the same day, and right up the street in the stadium at Pomona High School, the 73 graduating seniors of Pomona’s Village Academy High School did something that hasn’t

been seen around here for a while – they actually walked across a stage on the 10-yard line of the artificial turf, after sitting in socially distanced chairs on the field with 500 socially distanced family members and friends looking on from the bleachers.

“Today is a reflection of your



Students at Pomona’s Village Academy High School walked across a stage on the football field during their graduation ceremonies at Pomona High School.

journey as you make your plans to move forward,” said Principal Joseph Biagioni. “Your education here at Village Academy High School may have ended but the foundation that you have built will be the basis for the rest of your life.”

“High school is when you learn the most valuable lessons in life’s journey and village academy high school has granted you an opportunity for an extensive and rigorous education,” he added. “The classes offered fit a variety of every type of student, on every type of level.”

“Individually and together, you have earned many scholarships, academic awards, achievements, you have shone brightly in art, music, film, civic engagement, cultural events, drama production, (and) many more activities on campus and throughout the community,” Biagioni said.

He acknowledged students faced challenges during the past year.

“I know your senior year was not the year you envisioned when you entered high school as a freshman,” he said. “But I believe in you, Class of 2021. You have shown that you are driven to be successful.”

“I know what I’ll be saying in the future when those around me begin to complain or say this is too hard or we can’t do that, and I will say, ‘Well let me tell you

opened our horizons to new opportunities.”

And as juniors when “we finally got to be upper classmen,” she said “who knew junior year would come to an abrupt stop.”

“A key takeaway from junior year is to enjoy each and every moment without taking the people and things around you for granted because anything can be taken away with a moment’s notice,” she said, referring to the pandemic closures.

“Our senior year is one to be marked in history,” Nguyen said. “Who would have thought that we would need to pass AP (advanced placement) exams in a pandemic and attend ZOOM university, all while having to decide on who and what we want to be before we could graduate.”



Kaitlyn Nguyen
Village Academy Valedictorian

Joseph Biagioni
Principal, Village Academy High School

about the Village Academy High School Class of 2021,” he said.

He said they were “resilient, tenacious, creative, talented and resourceful and a class that will make a change in the world – and they could handle anything that was thrown their way, even a pandemic.”

Valedictorian Kaitlyn Nguyen, looking back on her high school years, told her classmates their freshman year was “full of mischief, laughter and new adventures but nonetheless we learned that together as a team we could accomplish anything.”

During their sophomore year, they “knew their routines and we

“In the blink of an eye we’ll be off in a new world,” she said. “We have grown to become compassionate, resilient, creative and conscientious people.”

And she added that whether they are going on to college, jobs or the military, “we will all be starting a new chapter.” (Nguyen will be attending classes at the University of Pennsylvania.)

“Take this opportunity, set your standards high and strive for a clear vision of your future,” she said. “Remember, we are the authors of our own stories and we get to make our own choices and choose our own destinies.”

Graduation time... pg. 19

Choices... from pg. 13

thing from pregnancy tests, pregnancy support, ultrasounds and options counseling to adoption referrals, parenting classes, and abstinence education.

Women who believe they may be pregnant or just want someone to talk with are encouraged to contact the organization. All services

Employee protection bill authored by Sen. Leyva passes Assembly Judiciary Committee hurdle

Legislation authored by State Sen. Connie Leyva that would empower survivors of workplace harassment or discrimination passed the Assembly Judiciary Committee this month.

"SB 331 will ensure that workers are always able to speak out against harassment or discrimination in the workplace – both to demand accountability and to prevent future abuses by perpetrators," Leyva said. "California workers should never be forced into agreements that protect perpetrators and only serve to hurt and disempower survivors."

She said if and when the measure is signed into law, the "Silenced No More Act" will empower workers and help to stop this unacceptable behavior in workplaces across the state.

The bill was sponsored jointly by the California Employment Lawyers Association, Earthseed and Equal Rights Advocates.

It would expand current protections against "secret" settlements to now cover settlement agreements involving all forms of harassment or discrimination.

In addition, it would expand the prohibition on overly broad confidentiality and non-disparagement clauses in employment agreements to cover workers who are required to sign these types of clauses as part of a severance

Arts education

award... from pg. 16

minimum of three of the five arts disciplines of the state arts standards -- dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts.

They also must show one level of improvement for at least one student subgroup in either school climate, suspension rate, student engagement, chronic absenteeism or graduation rate, or academic achievement.

Recipients were expected to be honored virtually.

are free and strictly confidential. Choices Women's Resource Center is located at 3560 W. Temple Ave., Suite H, Pomona.

For more information, call (909) 444-2999 or visit the web site at www.partnerwithchoices.org. A 24-hour hotline is available at (800) 395-HELP (4357).

agreement. According to a news release, Leyva authored another measure – and the governor signed into law – SB 820 in 2018, a bill known at the Stand Together Against Non-Disclosures Act.

That measure now specifically bans non-disclosure agreements in cases of sexual harassment, sexual assault and sex discrimination, unless requested by the worker, as it was clear that secret settlements were helping to preserve hostile work environments by hiding complains from public view.

Because secret settlements play
Protection bill... pg. 20

that when she met him she told him that what she really wanted to do was "be on Broadway."

"When I was a sophomore in high school . . . I begged my mom, 'Mom, all I want to do for my birthday, I want to go to New York, I want to see New York and I want to see a Broadway show.'"

Of course, she made the trip to New York, she saw her Broadway show and, the next night, her mom took her to a piano bar which, she told her audience, is one of her favorite memories. (All of this, of course, was her lead-in to singing "New York, New York.")

It seems like that one trip might have been enough to get a high school girl hooked if, that is, she wasn't already. (Is that like saying "These vagabond shoes, they are longing to stray?")

No, you say? Well, we heard it from an excellent source that she's heading back to "The Big Apple" in August to start classes at Marymount Manhattan College, working on a bachelor's degree in fine arts (acting).



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SAE live... from pg. 2

That means, of course, she's heading to New York for school and then, of course, with a little more work, on to Broadway – for real!


So, join us, Pomona, in urging Maleyah to give our regards to Broadway – including telling,

as the George M. Cohan song (from his musical "Little Johnny Jones," 1904) says, "all the gang at 42nd Street."

Because, the way things look from here, she's in a pretty good position to "tell them I'll be there, 'ere long."

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- LaundryLand Coin Op Laundry, 744 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- American Legion Post #30, 239 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- Pomona Eagles, 854 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona



Graduation time... from pg. 17

International Polytechnic High School (iPoly)

And back in the parking lot at Pomona's Fairplex last month, using the same stage and equipment Cal Poly Pomona used for 20 graduation ceremonies, iPoly made it official – for some 124 graduates representing a 100 percent graduation rate with 96 percent going on to higher education, 3.2 percent going into the armed forces and less than 1 percent undecided.

Principal Ginger Merritt-Paul, in iPoly's 25th commencement address that was marked with emotion, told students that "it's been 14 months since that day in March 2020 when the world changed,"



Marina Solis, a senior dance major at Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise, performs at her graduation ceremonies last month.

but that "as a result of the pandemic we have had the opportunity to take a pause, slow down



The SAE's Maleyah Moses, a graduating senior, performs in a trio at her commencement exercises. Pictured, from left, are Moses, guest artist Brian Oliva, and senior Harmony Nichols.

and reflect upon what is important in our lives."

"Class of 2021, your senior year has been unique in every sense of the word," she said. "As a matter of fact, this is the first time as seniors you are all present together in one place."

"I want to make sure that you all know that what you have accomplished during these four years isn't lessened by what

is happening right now in the world," she said. "In fact, what you have all been able to do this past year is amazing."

"In a time where we've lost so much, it can be hard to appreciate what we have," she said, her voice breaking with emotion.

Yet the students have been given a "gift" of unexpected time – "time to explore interests and passions we may have oth-

erwise been too busy to pursue."

And, she said, students have had the time to appreciate others and "show gratitude to those around us doing their part to stay strong and serve others."

"I've heard people say, 'we got closer when we were six feet apart,'" she added. "The resiliency and compassion witnessed in this past year shows me that

Graduation time... pg. 20



SAE Co-founder Ed Tessier

Memories and emotions... from pg. 15

have fought to preserve our democracy."

And Andrea Moreno, representing Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis and district director of Solis' Pomona regional office, said Memorial Day is a day on which "we take time as a nation within our communities and within our hearts to pay homage and recognize the significance of Memorial Day."

"Over 1.3 million service men and women have sacrificed their lives to defend our freedom over the course of our national history," Moreno said. "Today, we are here together to reflect as a nation and pay respect to our national heroes."

Pomona Unified School District Board Vice President Dr. Roberta Perlman also attended the ceremony.



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Graduation time... from pg. 19

through a difficult shared experience of completing your senior year online, you've ended well, you didn't give up, you persevered, and you succeeded."

She added that students have completed internships, a "multitude" of community service hours, passed a rigorous curricu-



Pomona Unified School District Board Vice President Dr. Roberta Perlman, speaking to graduating seniors at Village Academy High School commencement ceremonies as she accepted the class on behalf of the school board, asked students how it felt to actually have a "real live" graduation.

lum "all while learning virtually during a global pandemic."

And, she said, 80 percent of the Class of 2021 has completed at least one college class while concurrently enrolled at iPoly.

Dr. Maricela Ramirez, Los Angeles County Office of Education

Dr. Maricela Ramirez, chief educational programs officer at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, which operates iPoly, was introduced to students as a daughter of parents who immigrated from Mexico and a first-generation college student.

The graduate of Yale University, Stanford University and UCLA, she just received her doctorate from USC the week before iPoly's graduation.

Protection bill... from pg. 18

as much a role in perpetuating workplace discrimination, harassment and bias based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion and others, the "Silenced No More Act" seeks to ensure that those who raise these complaints about inappropriate and unlawful behavior in the workplace are able to speak openly about their experiences.

SB 331 is now advancing to the

Ramirez told students she joined iPoly last year to help celebrate their "porch" graduations in which teachers and administrators drove around Los Angeles County to pass out diplomas on front porches of student homes in the presence of their families, acknowledging that today there still are many differences.

"Yet one thing that is constant during these turbulent times is the kind and incredible staff at iPoly," she said. "I am in awe of you – on a daily basis you change lives."

Ramirez also thanked the parents and families.

"As you know, our job is to give our children roots and wings, and today is part of that



Dr. Maricela Ramirez
Los Angeles County
Office of Education

journey," she said. "Parents and families, you have been the rock for your children during this time."

"Together you have accomplished so much," she added.

Ramirez told parents that 13 percent of the students participated in the "Young Scholars Program," 7 percent participated in "special admit" at a community college, 81 percent participated in dual enrollment for courses at Mt. San Antonio Col-

Assembly Labor and Employment Committee for consideration.

It is supported by numerous labor organizations, the Anti-Defamation League, the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, the National Council of Jewish Women-California, the National Women's Political Caucus of California, Whistleblowing International Network and others.



Principal Ginger Merritt-Paul

lege, 37 percent are first generation students, and 124 students have completed 12,534 hours of community service.

And, she said, they will be going on to study art, humanities, music, communications, business, marketing, engineering, math, political science, science and health science.

"Class of '21, you are the leaders that are paving our future, and I feel extremely reassured that you will help make our world a better place," Ramirez said. "Always be yourself."

She concluded her comments

Leyva bill passed by Senate to expand and modernize birth control access

Prioritizing the ability of Californians to receive timely access to birth control and ensure greater contraceptive equity statewide, the California State Senate this month passed Senate Bill 523 authored by State Sen. Connie Leyva that will expand and modernize birth control access in California regardless of an individual's gender, insurance coverage status, where they work or where they go



Students from Pomona's iPoly walked across the stage to receive their high school diplomas while members of their families and friends watched – live and on two big screens – "drive in" style in the parking lot at Pomona's Fairplex.



with a quote from former first lady of the United States Eleanor Roosevelt:

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

to school.

Jointly sponsored by Essential Access Health, NARAL Pro-Choice California, and the National Health Law Program, the bill seeks to make California's birth control benefits gender inclusive, require coverage of over-the-counter birth control options, expand contraceptive coverage benefits to Californians enrolled in state employee and university

and college health plans, and clarify that employers in California may not discriminate or retaliate against their employees based on their personal contraceptive or reproductive health decisions.

"SB 523 strengthens the ability of Californians to receive timely access to birth control, as well as reduces barriers to contraceptive care by creating greater health eq-

Leyva bill providing owners help with shifting to zero-emission vehicles passes state Senate

The California State Senate passed legislation by State Sen. Connie Leyva this month that will reduce air pollution and maximize funding and deployment of zero emission vehicles by creating an innovative state program that will design new financing tools to help owners of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles purchase cleaner zero-emission alternatives.

Senate Bill 372 will establish a Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Purchasing Assistance Program within the Air Quality Improvement Program at the California Air Resources Board. It will be administered by the California Pollution Control Financing Authority.

“I know from living, working and representing communities in the Inland Empire that the health of our families is greatly burdened by air pollution caused by medium and heavy-duty trucks traveling through the region to and from warehouses and ports,” Leyva said in a news release. “SB 372 will create a one-stop shop to coordinate with other efforts, like

grants and incentives, so that zero emission vehicle transition is a straightforward and equitable option for fleets of all types and sizes in California.”

“I believe it is critical that we continue to deploy practical solutions to help fleets transition to zero-emission vehicles so that every Californian has access to clean air,” she said.

Medium- and heavy-duty trucks and buses are a major source of air pollution in California, responsible for about 35 percent of statewide nitrogen oxide emissions and approximately 26 percent of total statewide diesel particulate matter emissions.

These emissions hurt the health of Californians, especially in underserved communities and disproportionately impacted populations, according to the release.

Replacing these vehicles with zero-emission alternatives is necessary to reduce the harmful air pollution that negatively impacts public health and worsens climate change, Leyva said.

Alzheimer’s Association California Southland encourages making ‘brain health’ a priority

The Alzheimer’s Association California Southland, citing Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month during June, is encouraging residents to make brain health an important part of their return to normal as COVID-19 vaccines roll out across the country causing many to resume their lives.

“The past year has been extremely challenging for most Americans,” said Margaret Barron, executive director of Alzheimer’s Association California Southland. “Chronic stress, like that experienced during the pan-

demic, can impact memory, mood and anxiety. As California residents begin to return to normal, we encourage them to make brain health a priority.”

The organization offers five suggestions to promote brain health and help restore mental well-being:

1. Recommit to brain-health basics like gym memberships, social engagement, and healthful eating.

The Alzheimer’s Association is examining the role lifestyle inter-

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uity across the state,” Leyva said. “By making California’s contraceptive laws and benefits more equitable, I am confident that we will be able to reduce the on-going health disparities in reproductive health outcomes for people of color, low-income Californians and young adults.”

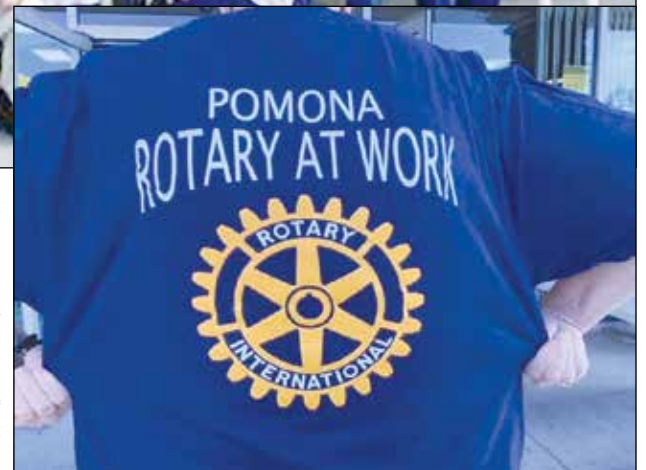
SB 1053, a related measure, became law in 2014 requiring Medi-Cal managed care and most commercial health plans to cover all FDA-approved contraceptive methods without co-pays or re-

strictions. Since that time, several states have expanded access to birth control even further by requiring health plans to cover over-the-counter birth control pills, condoms and vasectomies and other male birth control methods.

Because California was a pioneer in enacting these measures and other states have built on the state’s success, it is important that California once again lead on contraceptive equity issues, according to the release.



ROTARY’S ANNUAL ‘GOOD FOR THE SOLE’ EVENT -- Members of Pomona Rotary pose for a group photo during last month’s annual “Good for the Sole” shoe drive event. Members receive a list of 100 kids, selected by school health clinic officials, who end up walking out with a new pair of new shoes. The event, now held at the Big 5 Sporting Goods store on Foot-hill Boulevard, was launched in 2012. Big 5 provides Rotary with a discount and opens the store early for the give-away. Rotarian Janet Roy, General Manager of Pomona Valley Memorial Park, chaired this year’s event. Rotary President Ron Vera is pictured at left in front. Pictured, at right, is a photo of the back of a T-shirt of one Rotarian who, of course, is hard at work.



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Photos courtesy of Thanh Nguyen

SCOUTS AGAIN PLACE FLAGS FOR VETERANS AT POMONA CEMETERY -- Dozens of Boy Scouts from Troop 777 of Diamond Bar and Troop 309 of Ontario along with Cub Scouts from Pack 818 (Pomona and Claremont) and others, along with parents and friends, turned out again this year to place flags at headstones of veterans at Pomona Valley Memorial Park. Don Bloch, Assistant District Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America, is pictured at rear, eight from left. Flags were provided by the cemetery and Pomona's American Legion Post 30.



Volunteer scouts line up to grab a supply of flags and then head out into the cemetery to place the flags at headstones of veterans.

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Celebrate safely! (Pomona Police Department is reminding residents all fireworks are prohibited in Pomona.)

Public service ad courtesy of La Nueva Voz



POMONA'S FIRST LEGAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY TO OPEN FOR BUSINESS -- "Stiiizy," Pomona's first legal marijuana dispensary, was scheduled to open for business in its 5,000 square foot retail location on Sunday (June 27) after going through a lengthy permit approval process. A spokesperson at an open house earlier this month said the permit approval process took a year and a half. Pictured at the open house are, from left, company representatives Briana Bowers, Rene Lerma (assistant manager at the company's Jurupa Valley store), and Hayley Johnston. Pictured on the screen, at rear, is "Authentic," one of the company's product brands. The three i's in the company name represent "inspire, influence, innovate," the spokesperson said. And the name itself comes from "steezy," which is skater (skateboarder) slang for "style and ease." The store is located at 1605 W. Holt Ave., Pomona (at Dudley Street). Hours of operation will be 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. A spokesperson said the company now has 13 stores throughout California. Corporate headquarters of Shryne Group, Inc., the parent company, are in downtown Los Angeles. Cannabis in California has been legal for medical use since 1996 and for recreational use since late 2016.

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ventions, including diet, may play in protecting cognitive function. Many experts agree that people can improve their brain health and reduce the risk of cognitive decline by adopting healthy lifestyle habits, including:

- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a heart-healthy diet.
- Get proper sleep.
- Stay socially and mentally active.

2. Return to normal at your own pace – some 49 percent of adults report feeling uncomfortable about returning to in-person interactions when the pandemic ends.

3. Help others – there is evidence that shows helping others in a crisis can be an effective way to alleviate stress and anxiety.

4. Unplug and disconnect – technology

has dominated our daily lives during the pandemic like never before and, while it has kept us connected, it also has created fatigue for many Americans.

5. Control your stress before it controls you – in small doses, stress teaches the brain how to respond in healthy ways to the unexpected, inconvenient, or unpleasant realities of daily life.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been an overwhelming time for all of us," Barron said. "It's important for people to know there are steps we can take to lessen the stress and anxiety we might be feeling. It can be easy to take brain health for granted, but now more than ever, it's a good idea to make it a priority."

For more information, visit alz.org.



FIXING UP THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS 'RESCUE SQUAD' VEHICLE -- Pomona car detail expert Richard Ambroze and four other volunteer detail experts spent a total of 17 hours over a two-day period last month detailing and preserving the original 1974 Dodge custom built by the Universal Studios crafts unit that "starred" in the 1970s hit television series "Emergency!" At the end of the series, the fictional Squad 51 vehicle was given to the Los Angeles County Fire Museum where it can be seen today. (Before the museum opened, Squad 51 was stored at the fire department's headquarters in East Los Angeles where it was unofficially used in real-life service when an assigned squad had mechanical issues.) According to museum literature, before the television series, paramedics were unheard of -- the show introduced the world to the idea of firefighters and paramedics providing emergency medicine out in the field. Ambroze said the volunteers, part of "The Detail Mafia," corrected all the paint, took out scratches and swirls, and applied a ceramic coating "three times over" for long-term protection in the museum. The group also has worked on the original Air Force One on display at the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Washington, devoting about a week each year working on its upkeep. The airplane served Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and others. Pictured is Ambroze, in the close-ups, showing off his technique. From left, in the group shot, are Renny Doyle, project leader, of Big Bear; Prentice St. Claire, of San Diego; Chris Woolman, of Sylmar; and Ambroze. Not pictured is Kyle Clark, of Fontana. The Los Angeles County Fire Museum is located at 16400 Bellflower Blvd., Bellflower, (562) 925-0234, and is open Wednesday through Sunday. Ambroze owns and operates Pomona's Guns & Hoses Detailing and offers complete detailing services by appointment. For more information, visit the web site at gunshosesdetailing.com or call (626) 926-8936.



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