

*Happy Holidays!*



THE AMAZING GAREY VIKING BAND! -- Members of everybody's favorite Garey Viking Band, under the direction of Anthony Bonner, performed another amazingly professional annual Christmas concert performance in the school gym this month to a sold-out capacity crowd. Pictured is Bonner congratulating members of the band at the end of the show. (For more holiday photos, see the Pomona Christmas Parade special section, beginning on page 13, and Christmas on Columbia on page 7.)



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The New Voice, a Bilingual (English/Spanish) Publication  
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Pomona Chamber of Commerce



Member

Issue No. 173

Thursday, December 28, 2023

## Pomona city manager steps down after four years, receives \$600,000 in severance pay

Without advance public notice, announcement or explanation, the City of Pomona and its city manager for the past four years have parted ways leaving any real reason for the move, if there was one other than an "employment separation," to the imagination of Pomona residents.

Oh, and by the way, the "severance and release agreement," obtained by La Nueva Voz under a California Public Records Act request, allowed the city manager "to retire from his employment with the city" with a total of \$465,000, or 18 months of severance pay, the maximum authorized by the California Gov-

ernment Code, and a partial payment of benefits in the amount of \$50,000.

The city also agreed to cash out and pay the city manager's remaining accrued leave balances totaling \$89,975.

As would be expected with the March primary election just around the corner in Pomona with the mayor's seat and three city council seats up for grabs, imaginations have been working overtime with a number of unconfirmed reports. In fact, La Nueva Voz first heard from a news source outside city hall that the city manager's office had been "cleaned out" as early as the end of last



James Makshanoff

month or even earlier, and this newspaper received this information long before the story surfaced

in any other news media outlets either print or on-line.

But what has been confirmed at this point in news releases and in conversations and e-mails with sources close to the story is that James Makshanoff first took "personal leave" for undisclosed reasons. No actual date was mentioned, but based on the timing of La Nueva Voz' original information, it appeared to be some time in November, perhaps even in early November. Informed sources would not specify when that personal leave began and why that personal leave – and later the city manager's actual "employment separation" – was not announced

in a more timely manner. In fact, the city didn't publicly address the issue at all, apparently until these questions first were raised by La Nueva Voz.

And that personal leave soon turned into the full-blown severance agreement, with Assistant City Manager Anita Gutierrez taking over as acting city manager.

All of this comes on the heels of comments from Makshanoff four years ago in a public "meet and greet" (February 2020 La Nueva Voz) that his approach to the job would be maintaining transparency in city hall to build up trust with the residents and the business

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**CHECK PRESENTATION IN THE PARK** -- Officials with Pomona's Catalyst Cannabis Co. this month presented the City of Pomona with their second "public benefit" contribution since their opening in December 2021. The check for \$154,834 was presented in a brief ceremony in Pomona's Garfield Park. Their first check, presented in June, was for \$84,704. The checks will fund development of a master plan for upgrades to the park to continue over a 10-year period. Doug Alvey, an owner of Catalyst Pomona, said the company is in the process of getting the master plan going "so we can start working on knocking out the improvements that it calls for and (we're) excited to be a part of that." He said Catalyst tries to be "an asset to the community, to the neighborhood." Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval thanked Alvey for the "investment in Pomona." Pictured, from left, are Catalyst Pomona owner Sharon Alvey, Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, owner Doug Alvey, Sandoval and Andres Rivera of Catalyst. Cole said the company's contribution to the East Holt area and to the community "is what we want in our city -- businesspeople who actually take a part of being a partner with the residents here."

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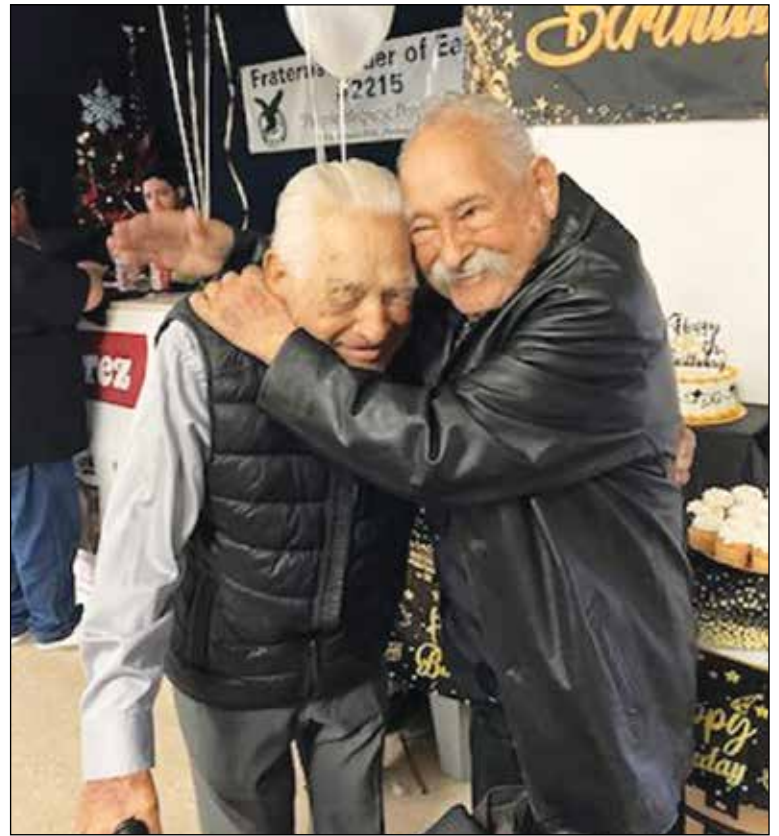
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**POMONA GODDESS PRESENTATION** -- Pomona's Neighborhood Services Department Director Benita DeFrank, who is retiring, was presented with a miniature Pomona Goddess statue at a City Council meeting this month recognizing her more than 20 years of service. She also received a special recognition from Claremont City Councilmember Jed Leano, representing the San Gabriel Valley Regional Housing Trust, which he chairs. DeFrank served as a board member of the housing trust where she worked on regional housing and homelessness issues. Pictured, from left, are Pomona City Councilmembers Victor Preciado, John Nolte, and Nora Garcia, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, DeFrank, and Councilmembers Robert Torres, Steve Lustro and Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY STEVE** -- Pomona legend Steve Manzanares, at right, who celebrated his 95th birthday at the Pomona Eagles this month, gets a hug from Ralph Manzanares, his younger brother. Also at the party were Steve's nephews, Byron and Ronnie Carrey, from Germany as a surprise for Steve. He hadn't seen them in more than 30 years. Steve, who worked for the LA County Fair from the 1940s until he retired in 1990s (except when he took time off in the service), built many areas of the original fairgrounds, including the Skyride and the fire station, working with other members of his family. He also served in the 82nd Airborne Division of the U.S. Army in World War II from 1946 to 1949. And his dad, Joe Manzanares, worked for the Fair from 1922 to 1948. And today, he lives in Pomona only two houses away from the house he was born in. As a banner at the event pointed out, the Manzanares-Perez family is a true "Pomona Founding Family." Here's to a whole bunch more of these birthday parties, Steve!

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## Step down... from pg. 1

community over time.

Informed sources insisted that the city manager was not terminated for cause and that he simply decided to retire. However, the severance agreement made it clear in its “recitals” that the city manager – under terms of his employment agreement – “would be entitled to severance pay if terminated without cause, but no severance pay if he voluntarily resigned or retired.”

But the severance agreement also stated that “Makshanoff and the city have agreed to resolve differences concerning his employment” – and that whole severance pay issue – “and to permit him to voluntarily retire from his employment with the city and the city, by and through its city council, desires to end its employment relationship with Makshanoff.”

Both parties represented in the agreement that there are no known legal actions or administrative proceedings pending arising out of the city manager’s hiring, retention, compensation or separation or based on any act or failure to act by the city involving his employment with the city.

He was required in the agreement to recover his personal property from the city no later than Nov. 15.

The severance agreement prohibited statements to the public or press beyond a mutually agreeable joint statement (quoted below), although Makshanoff agreed that the severance agreement itself was a public record that could be

released under a California Public Records Act request.

La Nueva Voz also requested a copy of the city manager’s most recent performance evaluation, also through a California Public Records Act request, but was informed that “performance evaluations are privileged under the Public Records Act and cannot be produced.”

La Nueva Voz learned in the development of this story that the entire matter, as would be expected, was discussed in executive (closed) session of the city council, although details of those conversations were not specifically disclosed and should not be, of course, under provisions of the California Brown Act unless disclosure is approved, in this case, by members of the city council.

Before Makshanoff was hired four years ago, the city retained the services of an executive recruitment firm that conducted a nationwide search attracting more than 30 applicants.

La Nueva Voz learned it will be up to the city council to determine whether another nationwide search will be conducted to find a replacement.

Makshanoff’s actual employment contract called for a \$275,000 annual salary with annual increases of 4 percent.

He also received a \$500 monthly automobile allowance, a city “smart phone,” and a city-owned laptop computer, tablet or iPad with access to the city’s computer system for the primary use of con-

ducting city business.

The city also agreed to pay the professional dues and subscriptions required for the city manager’s continuation or full participation in international, national, regional, state or local associations necessary and desirable in his work or for the good of the city.

And the city agreed to pay business travel and “subsistence” expenses for official travel and attendance at meetings with the actual number of those meetings up to the discretion of the city council.

He also was credited with five weeks of vacation hours when he came on board and was scheduled to receive the same vacation accrual amounts as other “executive management” employees with 25 years of service.

Plus he was able to accrue “executive leave” at the same rate as other “executive management” employees, which was 85 hours in his first year of employment – hours he would have been eligible to “sell back” to the city.

In the event his employment contract was terminated by the city council for anything other than “good cause,” he was entitled to severance pay in an amount equal to 12 months of his annual salary according to his original contract. That amount, of course, was renegotiated to the 18 months included in the severance agreement.

“Good cause” under the contract included any breach of the

employment agreement, misappropriation of public funds, malfeasance in office, conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude, or a “nolo contendere” plea to any felony which adversely impacted his reputation or that of the city.

The employment contract was for a two-year period, after which it was to be automatically extended for another two years unless terminated in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

And the city manager could resign from his employment at any time upon giving 60 days notice to the city council.

Makshanoff, whose career in municipal government has included the city manager position in the cities of San Clemente and Azusa,

has served cities in Southern California in a variety of capacities since 1990.

He assured members of the audience in February 2020 that working for the City of Pomona would be his “last job.”

Makshanoff’s predecessor, former Pomona City Manager Linda Lowry, served the city for 14 years before retiring in December 2019.

All members of the Pomona City Council were given an opportunity in an eight-paragraph e-mail from La Nueva Voz to comment on any aspect of this story – including whether it was appropriate for the city to initially withhold what should be public information because there is an election going on if, in fact, that

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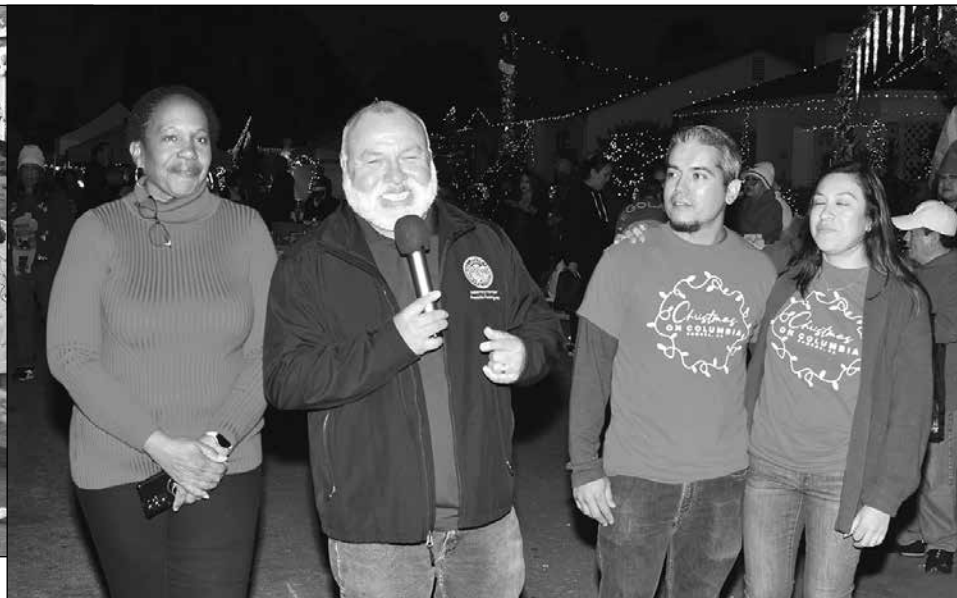
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Iso Nakasato of Athens Services, a sponsor of the event.



Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez helped kick off opening night of this year's eighth annual "Christmas on Columbia," a community holiday lighting event. This year's event featured speeches from all the dignitaries along with folklorico dancers from Pomona High School, Junior ROTC performances from Pomona's Ganesha High School, fancy food trailers and booths, and, of course, holiday lights in front of every house on the block. Christmas on Columbia founder Kimberly Johnson, also a neighborhood watch captain, said this year the celebration has extended beyond Columbia Avenue (at White Avenue) to include Winter on Wisconsin, Angels on Alvarado, Rudolph on Randolph and Chestnut on Chester. "In our own motto, Christmas on Columbia, bringing neighbors together one neighborhood at a time, we have achieved that goal in bringing in four more streets," she said. "This is the biggest we've ever had our event." Pictured, from left (above), are Kimberly Johnson, Rodriguez, and event co-founders Albert and Veronica Perez.



David Judah Oliver, Pomona's original poet laureate, read a special poem at the event.



Pomona City Councilmember John Nolte, at left, and Mayor Tim Sandoval (and his son Roy) spoke at Christmas on Columbia.



Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis



Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado



**ASSEMBLYMEMBER RODRIGUEZ' 11TH ANNUAL TURKEY DRIVE** -- Not only is it a nice gesture but they're fast! Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez' team conducted its 11th annual turkey drive at Ontario's Elks Club -- and they managed to give away nearly 800 turkeys with all the fixin's in 45 minutes! Volunteer helpers included UPS employees, AVID students from Ontario High School, and Vina Danks Middle School in Ontario. Rodriguez called it the most successful ever. "Over 700 families were served a Thanksgiving meal for the holiday season, more than we've ever done," he said. Rodriguez thanked the Elks for the use of their facility, and he thanked the Community Action Partnership in San Bernardino, which bought 100 turkeys, and Sysco donated 68 cases of four each. In addition to the drive-through give-away, representatives of area non-profits -- including several from Pomona like Pomona Unified School District's community schools, Prototypes, God's Pantry and others -- picked up turkeys just before the drive-through itself. And once the turkeys were gone, remaining grocery items were distributed to another 400 families. Pictured is Michelle Rodriguez personally handing a bag to the next car in line.

## Annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration set for next month at Pilgrim Congregational

Evangelist and motivational speaker Regina Brown will be the keynote speaker at next month's 42nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Project event, scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 14, at Pomona's Pilgrim Congregational Church.

Doors open at 5 p.m. with a marketplace, and the program begins at 6 p.m.

Six students from area schools will be honored with youth social justice awards for making a significant impact in their local community, including three students from Pomona.

For the first time ever, Anthony Bonner and the Garey High School Jazz Band will be per-

forming during the ceremony.

The event is free and open to the public.

The annual celebration honors and promotes the ideals of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and acknowledges youth who have demonstrated leadership in the spirit of Dr. King in their communities.

Selected students will receive an award ranging from \$200 to \$1,000.

The event is produced each year by the Pomona Inland Valley MLK, Jr., Project, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

For more information, visit the web site at [pivmlkproject.org](http://pivmlkproject.org).

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## Pomona wins \$30.2 million groundwater contamination case following 13 years of litigation

The City of Pomona has received a payment for \$30.2 million from SQM North America Corporation to recover the costs of groundwater contamination that was alleged to be caused by the company's defective fertilizer products, according to a news release from SL Environmental Law Group which handled the case.

The payment represents the city's full costs – both those already incurred and those expected to be incurred over the next 30 years – for treating perchlorate in its drinking water supplies, along with costs awarded by the court.

The litigation continued over the past 13 years, according to the news release.

SQM made the payment after the ninth circuit federal court of appeals, in a May 2023 decision, upheld a September 2021 jury verdict in favor of the city.

The jury found that defective perchlorate-tainted fertilizer sold by SQM, a subsidiary of the multinational mining company Sociedad Quimica y Minera de Chile, for use in the city's former citrus orchards had contaminated its drinking water wells

with perchlorate, necessitating a specialized water treatment plant costing tens of millions of dollars to construct and operate.

Perchlorate contamination, one of the major toxic chemical pollutants of groundwater beneath the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, occurred because of poor chemical handling and disposal practices, mainly between the 1940s and 1970s, and more recently became what was termed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the nation's largest "Superfund" site for contamination cleanup.

Perchlorate is a toxic chemical that can be particularly harmful to children as it disrupts hormones needed for healthy growth and development. A result, it is banned from drinking water supplies in California except at very low levels.

It is also the subject of a pending nationwide drinking water standard under consideration by the EPA.

The City of Pomona retained SL Environmental Law Group in 2010 and filed a products liability lawsuit against SQM seeking the \$30.2 million to recover past and future costs associated with investigating and re-

mediating perchlorate contamination.

Attorneys argued the company should take responsibility for the cost of the contamination cleanup caused by its defective products, as manufacturing methods available at the time the fertilizer was made could have removed the perchlorate from the fertilizer.

The case moved through multiple appeals and trials before the ninth circuit in Pasadena ruled that the evidence supported the city's claim and the amount of damages.

"The City of Pomona never gave up, and neither did our team of lawyers," said Ken Sansone, partner at the law firm. "I commend the resilience and tenacity of everyone involved in this fight to ensure that the polluters, not the taxpayers of Pomona, are held accountable for remediation of perchlorate contamination."

SL Environmental focuses exclusively on water contamination litigation on behalf of city and state governments, public and private water utilities, and other well owners.

The firm has delivered more than \$1.2 billion from corporate polluters to their clients.

## Step down... from pg. 6

was the reason – but, as of press time, no comments were received.

La Nueva Voz also attempted to reach out to Makshanoff for his response to these developments. While city staff would not provide his personal contact information, La Nueva Voz was able to locate his e-mail address on line and ask him for comment, although Makshanoff did not respond before deadline for this issue.

However, in a similar finding discovered in an on-line search, an archived San Clemente Times news story from December 2020 reported that the San Clemente City Council approved a \$360,000 settlement agreement with Makshanoff, who left his post in San Clemente after only five years to take the Pomona position.

According to the story, Makshanoff threatened to sue that city for breach of contract, wrongful termination and retaliation. That settlement agreement did not provide details of the allegations.

The agreement came about a year after Makshanoff announced his plans to take the Pomona position.

The City of Pomona announced a "mutually acceptable employment separation" in a Dec. 11 news release that listed Makshanoff's achievements including

producing a balanced budget four years in a row and consolidating waste hauling services by contracting with a state-of-the-art waste hauler.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, quoted in that news release as expressing appreciation for his dedicated service to the community, said the city manager "organized an exceptional group of hard-working department executives, making it possible for us to have a smooth transition."

"It has been a privilege to serve such an outstanding community," Makshanoff said in the release. "I am grateful to the city council, the executive staff, employees and residents who have given their time and energy to improve the City of Pomona."

Guitierrez, who has worked in public service for the past 20 years, was hired by the City of Pomona in 2018 as a planning manager. She became director of development services before her appointment as assistant city manager.

She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Cal State University San Bernardino and a master's in planning from USC. She plans to complete a doctorate in organizational change and leadership from USC next year.

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-- Susie Perales



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## Criminal court judge who grew up in East L.A. and made it through law school tells today's youth they are 'responsible for your own life path'

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lucy Armendariz told about 100 guests at this month's Healed Women Heal's 10th anniversary gala in Pomona that the youth of today need to understand that "you yourself are responsible for your own life path."

"But organizations such as Healed Women Heal, they need our financial support to help guide these women and girls to choose a better life path for themselves," she said in her keynote address.

Armendariz, who serves in the criminal division at the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center in Downtown Los Angeles, grew up in East Los Angeles and graduated from Roosevelt High School with her friend Tracy Evanson-Norwood, founder and executive director of Healed Women



Superior Court Judge Lucy Armendariz

Heal.

But she told an audience of friends and supporters at Pomona's Doubletree that when she was 8 years old, her mother was sentenced to life in prison – and died there last year at the age of 82. And she said childhood for her was not ideal and, speaking to the young people in the audience, said prison is not the kind of place they would want to spend the rest of their life.

"When you make the wrong choices in your life, the consequences of those choices will follow you, same thing as when you make the right choices," Armendariz said. "Right choices have good consequences. I stand here with the full understanding that organizations such as Healed Women Heal,

Your own life path... pg. 21

## Weight, wellness, and what they mean for you

By Usha Mantha, MD

Board certified family physician and obesity medicine specialist  
Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare

Gained extra pounds this holiday season? You are not alone! With obesity rates rising from 30.5 to 41.9 percent among the adult population between 1999 and 2020, it's clear that addressing weight issues is more important than ever. This increase, particularly noticeable since the COVID-19 lockdowns, has been compounded by changes in household dynamics, working conditions, reduced travel, and escalating mental health concerns.



Usha Mantha, MD

financed by Body Mass Index (BMI), but factors like waist circumference and body fat percentage also play a critical role in weight management. With new scientific developments emerging, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. You might have questions like how to start a weight loss and healthy lifestyle program, where to find help, or whether it's safe to start a new exercise regimen. Your physician is available to

listen to your concerns without judgment and offer individualized support during your weight loss journey.

Treating overweight and obesity – which are chronic, progressive, relapsing, and treatable disorders with strong neuropsychological and behavioral components – is not just about reducing numbers on a scale. It's about improving overall health and well-being. The benefits of weight management include:

1. Reduced risk of premature mortality from various causes.

Weight and wellness... pg. 19



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## Garey High School’s ‘invention celebrities’ prompt another ‘Golden Bell’ for Pomona Unified

Remember the stories in La Nueva Voz in 2017 about those amazing students at Pomona’s Garey High School in the InvenTeam who invented a medical contraption, flew back to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to show it off once it was completed, and just a year ago came back

and the largest education leadership conference in the state.

A judging panel composed of experts from school districts and county offices of education across the state reviewed written entries and made initial recommendations. “On-site” validators then reviewed the rec-



**POMONA UNIFIED BRINGS HOME ANOTHER GOLDEN BELL** -- Pomona Unified School District received another Golden Bell award last month, this time for the InvenTeam invention created by a group of talented students at Pomona’s Garey High School. Pictured in San Francisco receiving a check that came along with the award, with a total of 60 Golden Bell awards in the background, from left, are Pomona Unified School Board President Lorena Gonzalez, Garey biology teacher Antonio Gamboa, and Ashley Cascio, Director of Energy Services at Climatec, a building technology services company based in Phoenix and sponsor of the “technology innovation” category and the \$1,000 check in the Golden Bell competition. Not pictured is Garey physics teacher Alexander Ruper who coordinated the project with Gamboa. Pomona Unified now has received a total of six Golden Bell awards since 2014.

to ceremonies in the school gym to receive copies of their official patent – hand delivered by Kathi Vidal, director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office herself?

Well, they did it again – this time, to the delight of a very proud school board and staff at Pomona Unified School District, representatives of the Pomona Unified School District attended the California School Boards Association annual education conference and trade show last month in San Francisco to receive one of only 60 “Golden Bell” awards – the state’s leading educational honor – presented this year.

The award, presented to Pomona Unified School District along with a \$1,000 check, celebrates excellence in education programs and school board governance practices by recognizing outstanding programs. The award program is in its 44th year.

The awards reflect the depth and breadth of education programs and governance decisions supporting these programs that are necessary to address students’ changing needs, according to a CSBA news release.

Award ceremonies were held at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square. The conference is the premier continuing education event for California school board members

ommendations and assessed the programs in action.

This year’s Golden Bell winners demonstrated that they are addressing student needs through areas such as equity and access, school climate and safety, technology and wellness.

“As we wrestle with the aftermath of the pandemic and address longstanding issues related to student success, it’s important to highlight school districts and county offices of education that are demonstrating promising practices for closing opportunity and achievement gaps and supporting student wellness,” said CSBA CEO and Executive Director Vernon Billy. “This year’s Golden Bell winners have developed remarkable programs that can serve as an example for schools across the state.”

The Garey InvenTeam consisted of eight students – a talented group of young inventors – who participated in a program sponsored by MIT and The Lemelson Foundation which celebrates outstanding inventors and inspires young people to pursue creative careers through invention.

Garey was one of only 15 schools in the country at the time to receive a \$10,000



**HOLIDAY TIME AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!** -- It was even time to celebrate the holidays at the Historical Society of Pomona Valley when board members and friends got together this month at Vita Italian Bar and Grill at Doubletree in Pomona. Pictured, at left, front to back, are James Otero and Historical Society Board member Donna Manzaneros Otero; Board President Deborah Clifford; Board Vice President Mike Showalter; Board member Benny Ayala of Fairplex; and right side, from back to front, Board member Jay Munn, Board Secretary John Clifford, Board member Alice Gomez and Jesse Gomez; and Board member Renee Barbee, of La Nueva Voz.



Photo by Renee Barbee

**PEARLS OF SERVICE INSTALLS NEW BOARD MEMBERS** -- Pomona's PEARLS of Service, a non-profit organization working to make a positive impact on the communities it serves through programs and services to enrich the lives of residents, installed new officers and a new CEO this month at its annual "Connection and Scholarship Mixer" at Doubletree Pomona. Pictured, from left, are Talese Morrow and Endy Farrow, directors; Pomona Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Monique Robles, who served as the installing officer; Tiffany Dennis, director, and Mattie Johnson, CEO of PEARLS of Service. Not pictured were incoming CEO Kevin Marshall and directors Aaron Bratton and Latonia Jenkins. PEARLS of Service is an acronym for "Promoting Education and Reassuring Loyal Services." For information, contact [info.pearlsofservice@gmail.com](mailto:info.pearlsofservice@gmail.com). Incoming CEO Marshall is a veteran of 24 years in the pharmaceutical industry in roles including sales, account management, and sales training, according to a news release. He said he looks forward to leading the organization into a new era.

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## Pomona election pits Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, who is terming out in Sacramento, against incumbent Tim Sandoval for mayor's seat

It's election time in Pomona – this time around, the first with a primary election in March followed by a run-off in November since 1997 – under city charter amendments approved by voters in 2022 – and, after filings closed this month, the lineup includes four candidates for mayor with Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez challenging Mayor Tim Sandoval for his seat.

Rodriguez terms out in the Assembly at the end of next year.

While La Nueva Voz still doesn't have a crystal ball that works, if Sandoval wins his third four-year term in the November run-off (if a run-off is required), it would be his last because of term limits approved in those same charter amendments.

The way it now works, if any candidate for mayor or city council receives the majority of votes cast for that office in the primary, that candidate will be declared the winner.

But if no candidate receives the majority of votes cast in the primary, the two candidates with the highest number of votes will move forward to the general election for a run-off.

And, for those planning ahead, that same three-term term limit applies to the offices of mayor and city council, and this limit applies to those elected on or after Nov. 8, 2022.

In addition, if a current councilmember files to run for mayor and the mayoral term will begin before that councilmember's current term ends, the councilmember would automatically resign their seat. As you'll see below, that won't happen this time.

So take out your No. 2 pencils and a note-

pad to jot down the names of candidates in your district.

In addition to Sandoval and Rodriguez, candidates for mayor are Veronica Cabrera, a real estate broker, and Gustavo Ramirez, a teacher.

In City Council District 1, Councilmember John Nolte is running for re-election, with challengers Luis Cano, a realtor, Debra Martin, a library commissioner, businesswoman and former city councilmember, and John Mendoza, who listed no occupation in the filings.

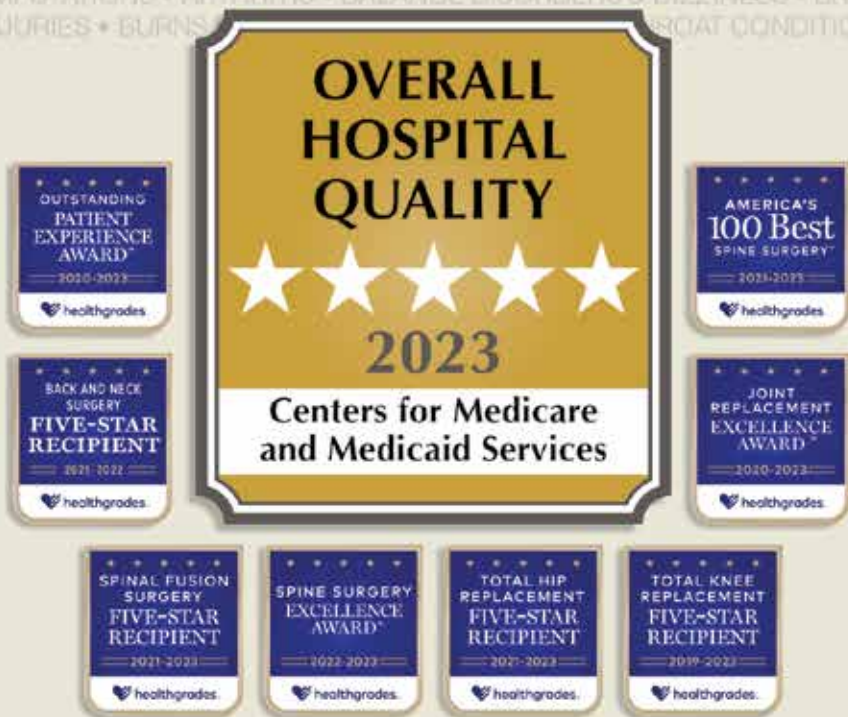
Over in City Council District 4, Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, the incumbent, is giving it another try but has challengers Guillermo Gonzalez, a human resources executive, and Chara Swodeck, a community organizer and consultant in the running.

And in City Council District 6, an open seat where incumbent Councilmember Robert Torres is stepping down to run for Rodriguez' seat in the state Assembly, candidates are Glenda Barillas, a commissioner and labor representative, Lorraine Canales, a retired counselor and teacher, and Miranda Sheffield, a teacher.

According to the Pomona city clerk's office, a primary election last was held on March 4, 1997, but the city charter was amended by voters on Nov. 3, 1998, and the new charter adopted at that time eliminated primary elections until now.

Complete information on the candidates is available on the city clerk's page of the city's web site.

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Photo by Renee Barbee

It was holiday time at Pomona's Youth and Family Club of Pomona Valley this month, where a gym filled with kids enjoyed a Christmas dinner, presentations, games and, of course, presents from Santa. And yes, for those who are wondering, that's John Forbing of State Farm and a long-time board member and board president of the club in the Santa suit.

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# A La Nueva Voz special “pull out” section: The 2023 Pomona Christmas Parade

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This year’s parade grand marshal was Vincent John Velasquez, who became interested in sports while at Pomona’s Garey High School. He was “most valuable player” on the baseball diamond in 2009 as a junior with a 6-1 record and a 1.89 ERA, and he had a 608 batting average and 18 stolen bases. He made his major league baseball debut in 2015 pitching for the Houston Astros, played for the Philadelphia Phillies from 2016 to 2021, the San Diego Padres in 2021 and the Chicago White Sox last year. He’s now playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates.



Athens Services was decked out and looking good again this year with two vehicles covered with lights and filled with employees, family members and friends. The local family-owned waste collection and recycling company now serving all of Pomona provides services to more than 250,000 customers in more than 50 communities. And a special thanks to Athens for sponsoring this annual La Nueva Voz annual pull-out Pomona Christmas Parade special section. La Nueva Voz has covered the parade every year since 2009 (when it rained). This year’s parade included 99 official entries plus a couple of political walk-ons at the end. About a thousand people marched, walked, bicycled or rode in the parade and an estimated nearly 3,000 spectators watched, waved and photographed as the parade passed by.



Hey, who called the fire department? Wait, that’s the man in red himself up there on a fire truck, signaling the official end of the parade (there were some walk-ons plus the parade volunteers and committee members bringing up the rear). Good job, Santa Claus, and Merry Christmas to you!



Those Ballet Folklorico dancers from Pomona’s Lincoln and Kingsley Elementary Schools, always a crowd pleaser, were looking good again this year in the parade. The traditional dance program has been available to students for more than 20 years.



Pomona Police Chief Mike Ellis, second from left, and three of his K-9 officers and their dogs walked in the parade leading a sampling of police vehicles of various types. And La Nueva Voz spotted Deputy Chief Christian Hsu riding in one of them. A big thank you and happy holidays to everyone in the Pomona Police Department! From left are Community Services Officer Courtney Louie with K-9 Tuckerman, Ellis, Pomona Police Officer Joshua Bukala with K-9 Stryker, and Officer Stacie Paraska with K-9 Scout.



Boy Scouts in Troop 818 (Claremont and Pomona) led the Downtown Pomona Christmas Parade carrying the banner this year.



The California Highway Patrol was well represented this year with cruiser vehicles, a promotional recruiting vehicle, and even a team of officers on official police bicycles. They were also celebrating the holidays with their “Chips for Kids” toy drive. Looking for a new job? The CHP is hiring 1,000 new officers so visit their web site to apply on line.



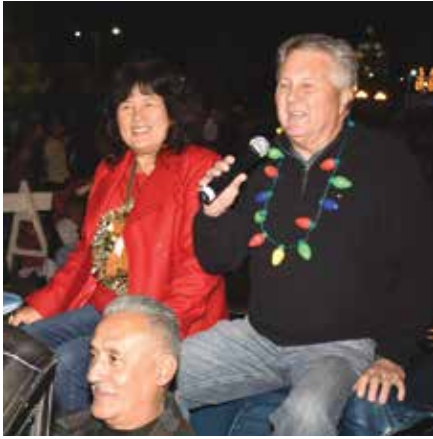
Yazmin Torres, Miss Pomona 2017, at left, and Evelyn Casas, Miss Pomona Finalist 2019, wave to the crowd in the parade.



Kimberly Johnson, founder of Christmas on Columbia, and her neighbors rode and walked in the parade. The annual holiday lights event -- each year the best Pomona has to offer -- includes every house on the block and this year has expanded to Wisconsin, Alvarado, Randolph and Chester. And it all started out of a neighborhood watch group. (See photos on page 7.) Looking good, Kimberly!



# Special Athens Services “pull out” section -- The 2023 Pomona Christmas Parade



Pomona City Councilmember Steve Lustro and his wife, Sharon



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval and his son, Roy



Pomona City Councilmember Robert Torres



Pomona City Councilmember Nora Garcia



Pomona City Councilmember Victor Preciado



Pomona City Councilmember John Nolte, at left, and his son, Miles Nolte, also a resident of Pomona



Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole



Three Valleys Municipal Water District Director Carlos Goytia got out of the car and walked the route in the parade. Merry Christmas, Carlos!



Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, his wife Michelle, and their grandson Tanner Rodriguez, 3, greeted the crowd in this year's parade.



Congresswoman Norma Torres



Pomona Unified School District Supt. Darren Knowles speaks to the crowd during the parade. From left are PUSD Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman, Board President Lorena Gonzalez, and Knowles.



Pomona Unified School District Board member Patty Tye



Mt. SAC Board Members Peter Hidalgo, at left, representing Pomona, San Dimas, La Verne and South Glendora, and Dr. Manuel Baca, representing Pomona and North Diamond Bar



Mt. San Antonio College Board Member Jay Chen representing Hacienda Heights and La Puente



Here's somebody everybody in Pomona knows -- Eva Thiel-Maiz, at right, representing Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis. A lifelong resident of the San Gabriel Valley, Solis went to Washington, D.C., to serve as Secretary of Labor under President Obama -- the first Latina to serve in the Presidential Cabinet. And that's Eva's daughter Jade Thiel-Maiz shooting a little video along the parade route on her phone.



The Pomona High School marching band was great as always.



Pomona Chamber of Commerce Board Chair Nef Cortez, standing, speaks to the crowd as he rides the parade route with Pomona Cultural Arts Commissioner Joshua Swodeck.



Representing the City of Pomona Planning Commission is Vice Chair Yesenia Miranda Meza.



Better hold on to your hats when No Te Rajes Jalisco folklorico dancers from Pomona's Galan Cultural Center march by! They offer dance classes for everyone, ages 3 to 90, plus zumba, fitness, hip hop and more. And the first class is free!



Members of the Pomona Pride Center rode in the parade. The non-profit works to provide a safe, supportive and empowering home for the Pomona Valley LGBTQIA+ community.



Those exotic performers with Pomona's own Stage Global -- swinging on hoops and walking the parade route on stilts (ouch!) brought a bit of the circus to the Downtown Pomona Christmas Parade. The group offers circus, dance and fitness training in Downtown Pomona. Yes, Virginia, you can run away with the circus and you can do it right here in Pomona!



Pictured, from left, are Teen California Margareth Estacio, Miss California Tina Phan, and Mrs. California Dr. Corinne Devin. The three were crowned last month at their state preliminary pageant and will compete at the United States of America Pageants National next July in San Antonio.



Members of Pomona's Girl Scout Troop 70144 marched in the parade.



The Youth and Family Club of Pomona Valley was well represented in this year's parade.



Representatives of the Credit Union of Southern California rode and walked in the parade to wish everyone a happy holiday season. Now located in the Target shopping center, the company has become more active than ever working with various groups in Pomona and La Nueva Voz friend Joe Perez serves on the Pomona Chamber of Commerce board and also serves as a Chamber ambassador. Looking good, everybody!



Kids from Pomona's dA Center for the Arts riding in the parade carrying signs saying "Arts over Arrests" and "Poetry over Prison" celebrated the holidays Pomona-style in a float promoting the dA's current exhibit, "Sounds of Pomona: Coming of Age in open communication, fairness and accountability in policing."



Pomona Police Oversight Commissioner Eunice Russell rides in the parade to bring holiday greetings from the group working for open communication, fairness and accountability in policing.



Wow! What a special entry in the Downtown Pomona Christmas Parade! Pomona Community Life Commissioner Donna Jackson-Houston, at right riding in the car, has spent the last few years forming the Nogales Buffalo Soldiers Legacy Association and putting together a traveling exhibit reminding the public of the contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers, formed after the Civil War, once she learned her grandfather fought in the segregated all-Black regiments during World War I. And this month, it all came together in the Downtown Pomona Christmas Parade with the New Buffalo Soldiers 10th Cavalry, a group of re-enactors who will be riding in the Rose Parade in Pasadena as they have for the past 30 years. Riding with her in the car is Col. Irma Cooper, a veteran of 30 years in the U.S. Army. Great job Donna!

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Now we're talking! Here's some authentic parade marching band music marching past the reviewing stage, courtesy of that very professional Diamond Ranch High School band, led by Drum Major Sophia Pham.



Pomona's Eagles 2215 members, families and friends rode in the parade to bring their holiday greetings to the community.



Ethel Gardner, founder of Pomona's Kennedy Austin Foundation, a family crisis intervention center, and her friends marched in the parade.



Day One brought their holiday greetings to the parade. The community-based non-profit organization for the past 35 years has provided effective, high quality and culturally-sensitive public health education, intervention and policy development.



LA County Fair CEO Walter Marquez had all the bases covered in this year's parade on the Fair float -- he had everything from a mobile Christmas tree to banners telling the crowd he'll see them at the Fair in May. Merry Christmas, Walter!



Norma Quinones, chief executive of the San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps, rode in the parade with a couple of familiar-looking kids representing the Fairplex Mitigation Fund Advisory Committee, a City of Pomona committee developed to oversee the funds the city receives from Fairplex in a 2019 agreement. She was appointed to the committee by Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval.



Always looking good, the dance team from Pomona's School of Arts and Enterprise, well, dances its way down Second Street in the parade. The school thrives on a culture that rewards creativity, academic excellence and even improving yourself as a person. Applications are now being accepted to this "no tuition, no audition" art school.



Driving along the parade route are members of the National Council of Negro Women Pomona Valley Section. That's Linda Wright-Lee at the wheel, with Eloise Mays in the front seat. In the back are Autumn Washington and, not visible, Victoria Rasshan.



Pomona's Gangs 2 Grace youth boxing club rode in the parade with local youth boxing legend Tito Mercado, who holds the record of super light with 13-0 and 12 knockouts. He is the new U.S. WBC Champion. Congratulations, Tito!



Members of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Pomona, led by President Minerva Hernandez, driving the truck, walked the parade route dressed in costumes of the holiday season.



Pomona's Lopez Urban Farm had a farm dump truck decorated with Christmas lights and filled with students who work on the farm riding in the parade. Driving the truck was, who else, Farmer Stephen Yorba, who created the non-profit that made it all possible. Oh, and interested in a little history? The farm -- and Lopez Elementary School next door -- are named after Ignacio Lopez, who created El Espectador, an early Pomona community newspaper from 1933 to 1960 that was the predecessor to both La Voz and La Nueva Voz. And the farm is open to everyone. Want more information? Visit <http://www.lopezurbanfarm.com>. Good job, kids!





Photos by Renee Barbee

It all started this month with the Pomona Police Department's "Stuff-a-Cruiser" toy collection at Pomona's Target shopping center, at left, where families could drop off Christmas presents for children in the community and have their photo taken with Santa. And, while some of those presents found their way to kids in Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center at holiday time, and others helped replace toys lost in the fire this month at Pomona's Victory Outreach Church, most of them were distributed during the police department's Operation Santa Cop in the Pomona City Hall lobby, a tradition for more than two decades creating the magic of Santa's toy store with police helpers escorting children to an age-appropriate table to find just the right holiday present. And the 900 kids receiving presents this year might just have been a new record. Some of the presents will be organized in boxes at the police department for patrol officers to hand out on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Pictured at Operation Santa Cop are Corporal Angela Torres, at left, and Corporal Jason Conley with Santa (police range master James McAnally).



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**FULL MILITARY HONORS FOR POMONA'S BARRY DOLGOVIN**

-- Funeral services with full military honors were held this month at Riverside National Cemetery for retired Pomona Police Officer Barry Dolgovin, who died last month. He was 77. Dolgovin, a Vietnam veteran serving in the U.S. Army, was awarded the Purple Heart "with clusters" and served 40 years as a police officer, the last 30 in Pomona. He was a long-time Pomona Optimist member and served all the way up to Governor for the Pacific Southwest section of the Optimists. Pictured are the ceremonial "three-volley" firing salute and the traditional presentation of the U.S. flag to his wife of 23 years, Roberta Lahr-Dolgovin, as their stepdaughter Pomona Police Corporal Megan Gonzalez, who played a recording of the traditional police dispatch final call "end of watch" radio message, looks on. Pictured are some of the Pomona police officers present at the services. Front row, from left, are Lt. Manny Ramos, Capt. Todd Samuels, Capt. Ryan Rodriguez, Deputy Chief Christian Hsu and Chief Mike Ellis. "One of the things I appreciated about Barry was his honesty," said Pastor Jay Walden of First Baptist Church in Claremont, who officiated. And yes, Barry, as the radio message said, thank you for your service and we'll take it from here.



**RECOGNIZING POMONA'S FINEST** -- Two Pomona police officers assigned to the police department's "Downtown Unit" -- Officers Kelly Springford and Austin Chavez -- were honored this month at the Pomona Chamber of Commerce annual "Holiday for Heroes" luncheon at Fuego by Metro Event Center, attended by 184 members and guests. Both joined the Pomona department four years ago after graduating from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Academy and both are cultivating connections with business owners and managers to create a safe and vibrant environment downtown. Pictured, from left, are Paul Alexander, the department's administrative services division commander; Lt. Manny Ramos; Capt. Todd Samuels; Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole; Police Chief Mike Ellis; Eva Thiel-Maiz, representing Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis; Jenny Macias, representing Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez; Springford and Chavez; Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval; Capt. Ryan Rodriguez; Deputy Chief Christian Hsu; Pomona Chamber Board Chair Nef Cortez; and Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles.



**VETERANS HONORED** -- Military veterans from Pomona's Post 30 American Legion were honored at this month's Pomona Chamber Holiday for Heroes luncheon -- Pedro Jauregui, national director of outreach for US Vets and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, and Stefanie Boatman, Post 30's Vice Commander and also a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. Pictured, from left, are Post 30 Past Commander Roberto Arnold, Jenny Macias representing Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez; Pomona City Councilmember Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, Eva Thiel-Maiz, representing Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Jauregui and Boatman, Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval, Chamber President and CEO Monique Robles, and Chamber Board Chair Nef Cortez.



**FIRE DEPARTMENT HONORED** -- Los Angeles County Fire Department Capt. Brandon Comfort, assigned to Fire Station 182 in Pomona, and Fire Department Inspector Steve Vargas (not pictured), assigned to East Region Fire Prevention, were recognized at this month's Pomona Chamber Holiday for Heroes luncheon in Downtown Pomona. Pictured, at left, is Comfort with Pomona Chamber Board Chair Nef Cortez of Galaxy Re/Max Realty in Diamond Bar.

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Nueva  
Voz...**

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Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived on a fire engine this month at Pomona's Ralph Welch Park with Christmas presents for the kids, with Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez and his wife, Michelle, continuing a tradition that started when Rodriguez was a member of the Pomona City Council.



Photos by Renee Barbee

**GRINCH VISITS POMONA LIBRARY** -- It was time once again for "The Grinch" to visit Pomona Public Library this month as kids and parents -- as always -- were lined up in the Pomona Civic Center all the way out to the street (where Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval could be seen picking up his son Roy to grab something off of the ice cream truck). Included, all for free, were photos with The Grinch, photos with "The Whos" from Whoville (in "The Grinch" films) all dressed up as Grinch characters, and rides for the kids around the Civic Center on a real train!

**Weight and wellness...  
from pg. 9**

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- 4. Lowered risk for first and recurrent cancers.
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*Editor's Note: The Weight Loss and Wellness Clinic at Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare offers a community dedicated to supporting you in achieving and maintaining optimal health. For more information, call 909/596-7733, ext. 3800.*

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**Call the church office at (909) 622-1373 to RSVP.**

# Solamente una página

*Nota del editor: La Nueva Voz está agregando esta página con contenido en Español a petición e interés de los lectores. Un lector frecuente del Centro Comunitario del Parque Washington preguntó si este periódico pudiese incluir al menos “solamente una página” en Español. Entonces, buen amigo, aquí lo tienes. Esperamos que nuestros lectores nos den a saber lo que piensan.*

## El administrador de la ciudad de Pomona renuncia después de cuatro años y recibe \$600,000 en indemnización

Sin previo aviso público o explicación, la ciudad de Pomona y su administrador municipal durante los últimos cuatro años se han separado, no dando ninguna razón, si es que hubo otra que no fuese por “separación laboral”, dejándolo a la imaginación de los residentes de Pomona.

Ah, y por cierto, el “acuerdo de indemnización y renuncia”, obtenido por La Nueva Voz bajo una solicitud de la Ley de Registros Públicos de California, permitió al administrador de la ciudad “retirarse de su empleo en la ciudad” con un total de \$465,000, o 18 meses de indemnización por despido, el máximo autorizado por el Código de Gobierno de California, y un pago parcial de beneficios por un monto de \$50,000.

La ciudad también acordó retirar dinero y pagar los saldos restantes de días acumulados del administrador de la ciudad por un total de \$89,975.

Como era de esperarse con las elecciones primarias de marzo a la vuelta de la esquina en Pomona con el puesto de alcalde y tres puestos del concejo municipal en juego, las ideas imaginadas de los residentes han estado trabajando horas extras con una serie de informes no confirmados. De hecho, La Nueva Voz escuchó por primera vez de una fuente de noticias fuera del ayuntamiento que la oficina del administrador de la ciudad había sido “limpiada” ya a fines del mes pasado o incluso antes, y este periódico recibió esta información mucho antes de que la historia saliera a la luz por cualquier otro medio de comunicación impreso o en línea.

Pero lo que se ha confirmado hasta este momento en comunicados de prensa y en conversaciones y correos electrónicos con fuentes cercanas a la historia es que James Makshanoff tomó primero una “ausencia personal” por razones no reveladas. No se mencionó una fecha real, pero según la información original de La Nueva Voz, parecía ser en algún momento de noviembre, tal vez incluso a principios de noviembre. Las fuentes de información no especificaron

cuándo comenzó esa ausencia personal y por qué esa ausencia personal (y más tarde la “separación laboral” real del administrador de la ciudad) no se anunció de manera más oportuna. De hecho, la ciudad no abordó públicamente el tema en absoluto, aparentemente hasta que La Nueva Voz planteó estas preguntas por primera vez.

Y esa ausencia personal pronto se convirtió en un acuerdo de indemnización total, con la subdirectora municipal Anita Gutiérrez asumiendo el cargo de administradora municipal interina.

Todo esto viene inmediatamente después de los comentarios de Makshanoff hace cuatro años en un encuentro público (La Nueva Voz de febrero de 2020) de que su enfoque en el trabajo sería mantener la transparencia en el ayuntamiento para generar confianza con los residentes y la comunidad empresarial a lo largo del tiempo.

Fuentes informadas insistieron en que el administrador de la ciudad no fue despedido por causa justificada y que simplemente decidió jubilarse. Sin embargo, el acuerdo de indemnización dejaba claro en sus “preambulos” que el administrador de la ciudad – según los términos de su contrato de trabajo – “tendría derecho a una indemnización si era despedido sin causa, pero no a ninguna indemnización si renunciaba o se jubilaba voluntariamente”.

Pero el acuerdo de indemnización también establecía que “Makshanoff y la ciudad han acordado resolver las diferencias relativas a su empleo” – y toda esa cuestión de la indemnización por despido – “y permitirle retirarse voluntariamente de su empleo con la ciudad y la ciudad a través de su ayuntamiento, desea poner fin a su relación laboral con Makshanoff”.

Ambas partes declararon en el acuerdo que no existen acciones legales o procedimientos administrativos pendientes que surjan de la contratación, retención, compensación o separación del administrador de la ciudad o que se basen en cualquier acto u omisión de la ciudad que involucre su em-

pleo en la ciudad.

En el acuerdo se le exigía recuperar sus bienes personales de la ciudad a más tardar el 15 de noviembre.

El acuerdo de indemnización prohibía declaraciones al público o a la prensa más allá de una declaración conjunta mutuamente aceptable (citada a continuación), aunque Makshanoff aceptó que el acuerdo de indemnización en sí era un registro público que podría publicarse bajo una solicitud de la Ley de Registros Públicos de California.

La Nueva Voz también solicitó una copia de la evaluación de desempeño más reciente del administrador de la ciudad, también a través de una solicitud de la Ley de Registros Públicos de California, pero se le informó que “las evaluaciones de desempeño son confidenciales según la Ley de Registros Públicos y no pueden producirse”.

La Nueva Voz supo en el desarrollo de esta historia que todo el asunto, como era de esperarse, fue discutido en sesión ejecutiva (cerrada) del ayuntamiento, aunque los detalles de esas conversaciones no fueron revelados específicamente y no deberían ser, por supuesto, bajo las disposiciones de la Ley Brown de California, a menos que la divulgación sea aprobada, en este caso, por miembros del concejo municipal.

Antes de que contrataran a Makshanoff hace cuatro años, la ciudad contrató los servicios de una firma de reclutamiento de ejecutivos que llevó a cabo una búsqueda a nivel nacional y atrajo a más de 30 solicitantes.

La Nueva Voz se enteró que responderá al ayuntamiento determinar si se realizará otra búsqueda a nivel nacional para encontrar un reemplazo.

El contrato actual de trabajo de Makshanoff citaba un salario anual de 275.000 dólares con un aumento anual del 4 por ciento.

También recibió un subsidio mensual para automóvil de \$500, un “teléfono inteligente” de la ciudad y una computadora portátil, tableta o iPad de propiedad de la

ciudad con acceso al sistema informático de la ciudad para el uso principal de realizar negocios en la ciudad.

La ciudad también acordó pagar las cuotas y suscripciones profesionales necesarias para la continuación o participación plena del administrador de la ciudad en asociaciones internacionales, nacionales, regionales, estatales o locales necesarias y deseables en su trabajo o por el bien de la ciudad.

Y la ciudad acordó pagar los viajes de negocios y los gastos de “manutención” para viajes oficiales y asistencia a reuniones con el número de esas reuniones a discreción del ayuntamiento.

También se le atribuyeron cinco semanas de horas de vacaciones cuando se incorporó y estaba previsto que recibiera los mismos montos acumulados de vacaciones que otros empleados de “gerencia ejecutiva” con 25 años de servicio.

Además, pudo acumular “ausencia ejecutiva” al mismo ritmo que otros empleados de “gerencia ejecutiva”, que fueron 85 horas en su primer año de empleo, horas que habría podido “retribuir” a la ciudad.

En caso de que el ayuntamiento rescindiera su contrato de trabajo por cualquier motivo que no fuera una “buena causa”, tenía derecho a una indemnización por despido equivalente a 12 meses de su salario anual según su contrato original. Esa cantidad, por supuesto, fue renegociada a los 18 meses incluidos en el acuerdo de indemnización.

La “buena causa” según el contrato incluía cualquier incumplimiento del contrato de trabajo, malversación de fondos públicos, malversación en el cargo, condena por un delito grave o un delito que implique vileza moral, o una declaración de “nolo contendere” por cualquier delito grave que afectara negativamente su reputación o el de la ciudad.

El contrato de trabajo era por un período de dos años, tras el cual se prorrogaba automáticamente por otros dos años a menos que

se rescindiera de conformidad con los términos del acuerdo.

Y el administrador de la ciudad podría renunciar a su empleo en cualquier momento con previa notificación de 60 días de notificación al ayuntamiento.

Makshanoff, cuya carrera en el gobierno municipal ha incluido el puesto de administrador municipal en las ciudades de San Clemente y Azusa, ha trabajado en ciudades del sur de California en una variedad de capacidades desde 1990.

Aseguró a los miembros de la audiencia en febrero de 2020 que trabajar para la ciudad de Pomona sería su “último trabajo”.

La predecesora de Makshanoff, la ex-administradora de la ciudad de Pomona, Linda Lowry, sirvió en la ciudad durante 14 años antes de jubilarse en diciembre de 2019.

Todos los miembros del Concejo Municipal de Pomona tuvieron la oportunidad a través de un correo electrónico de ocho párrafos que La Nueva Voz les envió de comentar sobre cualquier aspecto de esta historia, incluso si era apropiado que la ciudad retuviera inicialmente lo que debería ser información pública porque se están llevando a cabo elecciones si, de hecho, esa fuera la razón. Pero, al cierre de esta edición, no se recibieron comentarios.

La Nueva Voz también intentó comunicarse con Makshanoff para conocer su respuesta a estos acontecimientos. Los empleados de la ciudad no proporcionaron la información personal de Makshanoff para comunicarnos con él, sin embargo, La Nueva Voz pudo localizar su correo electrónico en línea para pedirle un comentario, pero Makshanoff no respondió antes del plazo límite para publicar esta edición.

Sin embargo, en un hallazgo similar descubierto en una búsqueda en línea, una noticia archivada del San Clemente Times de diciembre de 2020 informó que el Ayuntamiento de San Clemente aprobó un acuerdo de conciliación de 360.000 dólares con Makshanoff, quien dejó su puesto en San

## Your own path... from pg. 9

organizations that play a key role in helping women and growth, organizations that believe in the importance of a diverse leader, being part of an organization literally saved my life.”

“My mom was sentenced to life in prison for selling large quantities of illegal drugs,” she said. “Our home was raided regularly by police dressed in full SWAT gear. They would arrest everybody in the house including me.”

She said she remembers being “terrified and everything turned upside down.”

Armendariz was placed in foster care at the age of 8 and remained there until she “aged out” at age 18.

And she remembers the judge who ordered her placed in foster care.

“He couldn’t pronounce my last name,” she said. “I remember wondering if he knew that I was 8 years old and that I was physically in the courtroom.”

And that, she said, is why today she makes sure that everyone in her courtroom gets looked in the eye so they will feel like they were “heard and seen and treated with dignity and respect.”

In her foster families, she said, “nobody was especially nice, either.”

“It didn’t take me long to figure out that I was a source of income for these families,” Armendariz said, adding that she learned that “if I didn’t want to be sent out of Boyle Heights, it was best to say nothing at all.”

As she approached her 18th birthday, many of the other kids around her in foster care “were getting pregnant, incarcerated and even killed.”

“I knew from early on that these kids were setting themselves up for failure or no future at all,” she said. “I knew that if I wanted to survive, I had to go to college. I had no one to fall back on, no parents as a safety net, I was the only one who was truly concerned about my own future.”

And she said she learned that those who were incarcerated or killed had something in common – they had no education or mentors.

“Once you have that education, no one . . . can take that away from you,” she said.

“In my experience, you have to be your own advocate, you have to be your own savior,” she said.



Tracy Evanson-Norwood



Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval

“It doesn’t mean you have to do it alone. Each one of us here today is the sum total of people who have helped us.”

“When you find people, others who you trust and who support you, anything is possible,” she said. “You really can achieve anything.”

“I know that it is my responsibility and duty to serve as a guide that people need while they figure out their own life path,” she said. “But the hard work has to come from you and you alone.”

“Maybe we didn’t have people who looked like us when we were starting out,” Armendariz said. “It truly doesn’t matter who sits in these positions of power. We need all of the talents that our society has to offer.”

“I want to encourage you to climb as far as you can (but as you climb) bring other people with you, support each other, stand for one another, reject the idea that if you win someone else has to lose,” she said. “We really all can win.”

“The luck of the draw can seem unfair – and often it is unfair,” she added. “The secret is to play the hand you are dealt and to play it for all it’s worth, while holding true to your values and the people that you hold dear.”

“No matter what hand you’re dealt, everyone has the capacity for greatness,” she said.

She cited statistics related to her “deck” – fewer than 3 percent of children in foster care will receive a college degree, 20 percent of foster care youth will become homeless after they age out at 18, and 71 percent of young women who came out of the foster care system will become pregnant by the age of 21.

And she said she often tells peo-

ple that “your dreams will come true not just because of your hard work but because other people will recognize your commitment and they will want to help you succeed.”

She was accepted into UCLA and was “on my way to the life that I wanted.”

But she also was aware for the first time in many years she would have three meals a day and would know exactly where she would be for the next four years.

Yet when it was holiday time, she was kicked out of the dorm and had no place to go. Because of that, when she was chief of staff to the state senate majority leader, she worked on legislation enabling foster care children to stay in the dorm during the holiday break at schools in the University of California or California State University systems.

It was also in college that she learned about racism and while there started thinking about law school despite the fact that only two percent of all attorneys are Latinas.

Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval also commended Healed Women Heal for their work.

“There are a lot of families, not just in Pomona but all over this country, hard working people, working class people, immigrant families who have real challenges, financial challenges

... and it’s particularly hard on relationships and the result is sometimes the things that Healed Women Heal deal with and work with on a daily basis,” he said, “which is to heal people who have been traumatized as a result of the struggles of being everyday working class people.”

“And I’m so thankful that we have an organization in this community that is doing this work,” he said, adding that it is important to do everything possible to help young people

“to understand the importance of healthy relationships.”

Evanson said the group was founded in 2013 when they were volunteering at Pomona’s House of Ruth and went out on their own “just to connect with other survivors and so not to run it as a business, not to do anything other than to connect with other women.”

They started by putting together “baskets of hope” and dropped them off at House of Ruth four times a year.

“I started to identify that we are putting women in motels or buying groceries or even buying plane tickets to fly someone out . . . and as we are doing this we don’t have the funding to do the things that we are doing and maintain it,” she said.

“After nine years of supporting

women and children impacted by domestic violence, this last year we decided to pick up our efforts to prevention and education,” she added. “And in 2022 with the help of the mayor, we did get our first \$20,000 grant and another \$10,000 grant from District 2 Councilmember Victor Preciado and a \$5,000 grant from a local community-based organization called Day One.”

“And with that \$35,000 we decided to open up our doors in Downtown Pomona . . . and we developed curriculum and workshops to prevent domestic violence,” she said.

Today, the group is working on targeting youth, going over “red flag” warning signs, types of violence and barriers to leaving.

And they are working on “building up” communication, boundary setting, “loving yourself more, identifying your core values, what do you like, what do you not like.”

“When you don’t do this work on yourself and you get into a relationship, someone else puts this on you,” Evanson said. “And then it’s really easy to lose yourself and get into something that you shouldn’t be in.”

“If we can just put it in on the front end and prevent it . . . we would be so much better off,” she added.

For more information, visit the web site at [www.healedwomen-heal.org](http://www.healedwomen-heal.org).

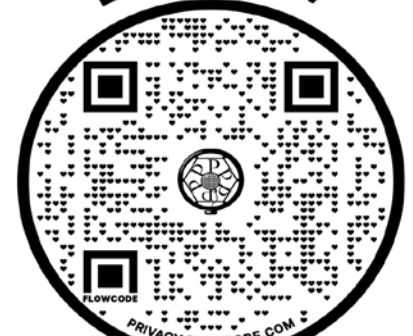
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## Golden Bell... from pg. 10

grant to cover costs associated with a “real world” invention, in this case a previously unavailable home medical device.

It was the first time Garey was selected to participate in the program.

The invention was awarded a U.S. patent on July 12, 2022. Called “Heart and Sole,” it is a shoebox-sized diagnostic device that allows individuals with diabetes to self-monitor foot health using four sensors measuring oxygen saturation, blood flow, magnetoencephalography (imaging) and nerve conduction velocity.

The idea was based on an actual need of a grandparent of one of the team members who was a diabetes patient.

Use of the instrumentation was expected to help prevent the need for amputation and other medical problems through monitoring the foot.

Teachers working with the InvenTeam on the project were Antonio Gamboa (advanced placement biology and chemistry) and Alexander Ruper (advanced placement physics).

Seven team members were young women and a total of six countries were represented on the team.

And all eight became first-generation college students upon graduation from high school.

Members were Diana Valencia, now majoring in English at Cal Poly University Pomona; Katia Avila, attending UC Santa Cruz majoring in computer engineering; Anh Tran, a student at UC Irvine majoring in mechanical engineering; Melody Sanchez, attending Cal Poly Pomona majoring in business administration; Jia Bragado, a student at UC Berkeley studying industrial engineering; Brianna Berdin, attending UC Riverside majoring in business administration; Evelyn Casas, attending UC Irvine majoring in public health; and Sushil Bohara, a student at UC Berkeley majoring in engineering.

CSBA is a non-profit education association representing nearly 1,000 educational agencies statewide advocating for the state’s more than 6 million school-age children.

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La Nueva Voz is a proud member of PUSD’s Literacy Collaborative.

## Renuncia... de la pág. 20

Clemente después de solo cinco años para tomar la posición de Pomona.

Según la historia, Makshanoff amenazó con demandar a esa ciudad por incumplimiento de contrato, despido injustificado y represalias. Ese acuerdo de conciliación no proporcionó detalles de las acusaciones.

El acuerdo se produjo aproximadamente un año después de que Makshanoff anunciara sus planes de ocupar el puesto de Pomona.

La ciudad de Pomona anunció una “separación de empleo mutuamente aceptable” en un comunicado de prensa del 11 de diciembre que enumeraba los logros de Makshanoff, incluida la producción de un presupuesto equilibrado durante cuatro años consecutivos y la consolidación de los servicios de transporte de

residuos mediante la contratación de una empresa de residuos de última tecnología.

El alcalde de Pomona, Tim Sandoval, citado en ese comunicado de prensa expresando agradecimiento por su dedicado servicio a la comunidad, dijo que el administrador de la ciudad “organizó un grupo excepcional de ejecutivos de departamento muy trabajadores, lo que nos permitió tener una transición sin problemas”.

“Ha sido un privilegio servir a una comunidad tan destacada”, dijo Makshanoff en el comunicado. “Agradezco al concejo municipal, al personal ejecutivo, a los empleados y a los residentes que

han brindado su tiempo y energía para mejorar la ciudad de Pomona”.

Gutiérrez, quien ha trabajado en el servicio público durante los últimos 20 años, fue contratada por la ciudad de Pomona en 2018 como gerente de planificación. Se convirtió en directora de servicios de desarrollo antes de su nombramiento como administradora municipal adjunta.

Tiene una licenciatura en ciencias políticas de Cal State University San Bernardino y una maestría en planificación de USC. Ella planea completar un doctorado en cambio organizacional y liderazgo de la USC el próximo año.

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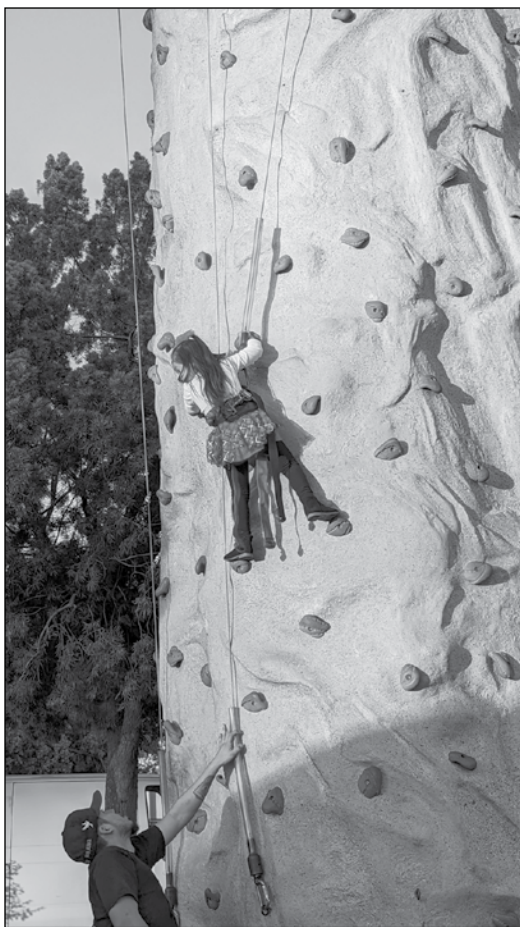
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**ANNUAL HOLIDAY AT THE PLAZA!** -- The annual "Holiday at the Plaza" in Downtown Pomona attracted the early crowd before this month's Downtown Pomona Christmas Parade and offered a little of everything -- from rock climbing and an ice skating rink to a real santa!

### Pomona: A beloved community

**By Thomas Allison, Member  
Compassionate Pomona**

During his lifetime, Dr. King spoke and wrote of a community that would be free from the "Three Evils of Society" – discrimination; poverty and excessive materialism; and violence and militarism. In his speech, "The Other America," Dr. King talks of an American society dominated by a system of the "haves" versus the "have nots." Walls of segregation divide these communities. However, the "Beloved Community" is a society, as I often put it, where the walls of segregation that hold up glass ceilings are torn down. Like the walls of Jericho, a great deal of faith and marching is required to bring these walls down.

This begs the question, what is a Beloved Community? Is the Beloved Community perfect? Was Dr. King calling for an unrealistic utopian society or was he talking about a more practical society? If Dr. King was envisioning a perfect society, why would he dream of a society where we would have great faith to move forward together, saying, "With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail

together, to climb up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day." Why would we need to pray, struggle, and go to jail in a perfect society? We would need to do these things because the perfect society does not exist. Dr. King knew this.

In November, I gave a speech on the Beloved Community at the NAACP Pomona Valley Branch's 10th anniversary. In preparation for that speech, I wrote a list of things that I believed a Beloved Community to have. Things like robust youth programming and mentorship, a commitment to compassion from top-to-bottom, an anti-poverty platform, appreciation for and the presence of a rich cultural history, and a few other things. There was a list of about 10 things. As I went through the list, it became clear to me that Pomona had all of these things. I asked myself, is Pomona a Beloved Community? I left the question unanswered that day.

As I reflect and contemplate while writing this piece, I believe I have come to resolve this question. The Beloved Community is not found without, it's found within. Meaning it's not seen in the physical appearance of the community itself, it's

found in the hearts, minds, passions, and actions of the people in the community. Like any other community, Pomona has its challenges. Crime, prostitution, and poverty have been historic challenges for Pomona. Many will look at the poverty in Pomona and say there's no way this is a Beloved Community. I will beg to differ. Pomona is not only a beacon of hope and refuge for its own poor, it's a place of refuge for everybody's poor.

Thinking through the lens of Dr. King, which city is closest to the community Dr. King discusses – the city that has no poverty, is clean and pristine, with very low crime rates, but is hostile toward the poor. The poor are scared to go there. The prevailing morality of this community is exclusivity, wealth, and individualism. Compare this to a community that has lots of poverty, is incredibly unclean in certain areas, and has more crime. Yet, the poor feel welcomed, like they have a place in the community. The prevailing morality of this community is compassion, restorative justice, and community engagement. I would argue until my last breath that Dr.

King's Beloved Community looks more like the second community rather than the first.

The Beloved Community is not the end, but it's the means to the end. It's the environment and atmosphere that make justice roll like waters and righteousness a mighty stream. It is the place, space, and culture where widespread compassion thrives and injustice is generally met with nonviolent resistance. From the outside, I would argue Po-

mona has the foundation for these things and is getting closer to securing these things each year. Pomona, from my vantage point, does not appear to need the moral revolution many places need to get to the ideal community. Pomona appears to need the material resources to accomplish its goals.

Let the world follow Pomona's lead in replacing cages for compassion, changing bombs for books and

**Beloved community... pg. 24**

### A new La Nueva Voz publishes each month on the fourth Thursday of the month.

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- La Verne Senior Citizens Center
- Pomona Chamber of Commerce, 101 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona
- Downtown Pomona Owners Association, 119 W. 2nd St., Pomona
- Western University of Health Sciences Patient Care Center
- Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center maternity, lobby, outpatient services, emergency room
- Gold Strike Market Carniceria, 412 N. Park Ave., Pomona
- Fairplex Chevron, Fairplex Drive and San Bernardino Freeway, Pomona
- Discount Market, Philadelphia Street and Towne Avenue, Pomona
- LaunderLand Coin Op Laundry, 744 E. Holt Ave., Pomona
- Pomona Eagles, 854 W. Mission Blvd., Pomona





**HOLIDAY PRESENTS FOR THE HOSPITAL'S LITTLEST PATIENTS** -- Keck Graduate Institute students and the Pomona Police Department teamed up last week to bring a little cheer to children hospitalized during the holiday season at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center. And they brought their gifts in wagons, huge boxes and large plastic bags for everyone interested in the pediatric unit. (You can look at the smiles to see if they were interested.) Pictured leaving a little something for a sleeping patient Kaleb, 1 month, are, from left, Pomona Police K-9 Officer Stacie Paraska (who was there with "Scout," a "yellow lab" scent dog, and Community Services Officer Courtney Louie, with K-9 "Tuckerman, who is part of the police department's canine companion program. Needless to say, both dogs were a hit with the kids.



**'HEY, THESE GUYS HAVE JUST WHAT I NEEDED!'** -- Noah, who is almost 2, decided right away that he wanted what these ladies had to offer, and it looks like mom and dad agreed. Pictured, from left, are Paola Pinto and Silvia Jauregui, both students in the Keck Graduate Institute master of science in physician assistant studies program. Pinto, who came up with the idea, is a second year master's student who will be graduating in May. "I remember when I was little and I was a patient in a hospital, I remember toys made my day so much better, so I wanted to do something and pay it forward," she said. All of the pediatric unit patients were in for various respiratory viruses, according to a hospital spokesperson. Pomona's inpatient pediatric unit is one of only three that serve children within a 15-mile radius. It serves approximately 1.5 million residents in the Pomona area.

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from pg. 23**

bombers for beds, and substituting empowerment for the three evils of discrimination, poverty, and violence. Stay true, Pomona, the world needs you. I will end this with the last message Dr. King had for the world delivered at the end of his very last speech.

"Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land! And so I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man! Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!!"



Flames through the roof and firemen pumping water on the fire from above can be seen in this screen shot from KTLA5. Victory Outreach moved into the Monterey Avenue location 10 years ago but has been located in Pomona since 1981. The congregation had only recently purchased the building, according to one member.



**SIGN STILL STANDING AT VICTORY OUTREACH POMONA** -- The church sign is still standing on the corner of Monterey Avenue and Main Street but the rest of the Victory Outreach Church building has been reduced to a pile of rubble that is now in the hands of a specialized clean-up contractor. The fire broke out during the night early on a Sunday morning this month, just hours before a toy give-away was planned. The toys were lost in the fire but community members, members of other churches, firemen and police officers came up with more and the give-away went on as scheduled in an empty parking lot across the street. A long-time church member told La Nueva Voz more than 500 families had signed up for the toy give-away. No injuries were reported, the cause was under investigation, and a massive clean-up was almost immediately under way.



**POMONA OPTIMISTS ANNOUNCE NEW STUDENTS OF THE MONTH** -- "Students of the Month" for the months of October and November were honored at this month's Pomona Optimist Club meeting at The Derby Room at Fairplex. All students honored are from Pomona's Lincoln Elementary School. Pictured, from left, are Optimist President Lorraine Canales, October winners Aylin Avalos, fourth grade, and Immanuel Magana, fifth grade; November winners Adrian Moreno, sixth grade, and Rebecca Moreno, fourth grade; and M. Joyce Bakersmith, past Pomona Optimist President and past Pacific Southeast District Governor.

**Pomona's Deputy Police Chief Christian Hsu stopped by the fire scene on Monday morning, Dec. 18, to check in on progress.** Pictured with Hsu is a representative of Cornerstone Builders and Restoration, Inc., contractors for the clean-up effort.



Caution tape because of the possibility of asbestos was cordoning off the entire block surrounding the church in the aftermath of the fire.







**HANUKKAH CELEBRATION AT GAR-  
EY!**

-- Pomona Unified School District Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman and new Garey High School student Daniel Rico, 17, a high school junior, (top right photo) kick off a celebration of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah this month on the first full day of Hanukkah's eight-day observance by lighting the traditional candle menorah, as Perlman and PUSD Supt. Darren Knowles line up to get their Hanukkah potato latkes (pancakes) and applesauce from community school coordinator Melissa Ayala, second from right, and family service case worker Esti Piedrahita (above). The community school program provides assistance to students with basic needs so they can focus on their studies. At right is Esti showing off a fresh batch of latkes and, second photo from top, Daniel spins the dreidel, a traditional game based on spinning the top-like toy, with friends Cam Lopez, a sophomore, and Ryan Tran, a junior. The back story on this is Daniel started school at Garey in September after moving to Pomona from Rialto and learned he apparently is the only Jewish student there. So he and Esti came up with the idea of sharing traditional foods with classmates, and the concept morphed into an entire Hanukkah celebration to help students understand the tradition. About 25 students showed up in a classroom after school and loved it (especially, apparently, the latkes and cookies). Perlman explained that the holiday of Hanukkah, the "festival of lights," commemorates the desire of all people to practice religion without oppression. Daniel told La Nueva Voz he thought everyone reacted "super positively" to the learning celebration. La Nueva Voz asked him how he likes Garey. "I really like the school," he said. "The first week was kind of tough but I really like it." And La Nueva Voz asked for his thoughts on the current Israeli-Hamas conflict. "Honestly, I do support Israel but I feel I don't support them 100 percent any more," he said. "I feel like they should focus on getting the hostages back and eliminating Hamas, not the Gaza people."



**TREE LIGHTING AT POMONA  
CITY HALL**

-- Pomona city councilmembers took a break from their council meeting this month to flip the switch on the holiday lights atop the city council chambers. Plus, as you can see, there was also what sure looked to us like snow involved in this event. Flipping the switch from the entrance to city hall are, from left, Councilmembers Steve Lustro, Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole, Nora Garcia, Mayor Tim Sandoval, and Councilmembers Victor Preciado, John Nolte and Robert Torres. Entertainment included an appearance by the Garey High School Marching Band.



**LOPEZ URBAN FARM NOW HAS ANIMALS, OPEN TO EVERYONE**

-- La Nueva Voz stopped by Pomona's Lopez Urban Farm last month to chat with Farmer Stephen and spotted a new addition -- a dozen Nigerian Dwarf goats who were, well, pretty much just climbing on everything and eating, um, everything they could reach. Farmer Stephen explained that Amy's Farm in Ontario, which he said "was an institution for 30 years doing school tours," closed down because the property was sold for development. Farmer Stephen said he bought half the herd, brought them in and built a pen for them. And now, anybody can come in and pat the goats. "We wanted them to see animals in the farm because that's kind of what people expect when they go to a farm," he added. So if you know anybody who wants to pat a goat for free, the farm is open from 5 to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays for night markets. The farm also is open to school tours and is in the process of developing a curriculum. "A lot of the kids in the community never had a chance to pet animals like this so it brings a lot of life to the farm," he said. Farmer Stephen said he's also in the process of building a pen for a 15-year-old tortoise which can be a couple of feet long, so watch your fingers on that one! And he has his sights on ducks after that after the first of the year. "The kids really love them and actually the ducks got along really well with the goats." Farmer Stephen, actually Stephen Yorba, a former teacher, founded the nonprofit Community Partners 4 Innovation originally at Urban Mission about 10 years ago, and then moved to the three-acre farm site leased from Pomona Unified School District. He said the next step is to build a workforce development program for Just Us 4 Youth, teaching "at promise" youth how to build and run an urban farm "from the ground up." Yorba said the training might help them get a job and they might even become farmers.

## Christmas Parade... from pg. 16



Members of the amazing Pomona Unified School District's "All District Choir" marched in the parade under the direction of Ryan Robinson, at left, and, not pictured, Michael Smith. The choir is made up of 100 sixth, seventh and eighth graders from 30 schools in the district.



And here they are again! Seems like the Garey High School Vikings band is everywhere. Plus wherever they go they always draw a crowd. Good job as always, Vikings!



Los Hermanos Banuelos is an equestrian team formed in 1995 with a mission of promoting their culture and national heritage by participating in parades and visiting public schools and community events. They will ride in the 2024 Rose Parade for the 15th time next month on their American quarter horses, Andalusians, Aztecas and Feissians. The Pomona parade had horses 10 years ago in 2013 -- in the rain -- when Rancho Arroyo of San Bernardino rode -- a group that had appeared three times in the Rose Parade. Some of their riders live in Pomona. And the Pomona parade had horses in 2019 -- Escaramuza Las Palomas De Rancho Jimenez of La Puente, with girls and women riding side saddle. Then this year, four years later, this month we had both Los Hermanos and Buffalo Soldiers on horseback.



Pomona's Latino and Latina Roundtable carried a banner with their messaging in the Downtown Pomona Christmas Parade (that's Lina Mira, executive director, holding the banner at right). The group is dedicated to fostering education, civic engagement, leadership and serving as a proactive voice within the community. Good job and keep up the good work!



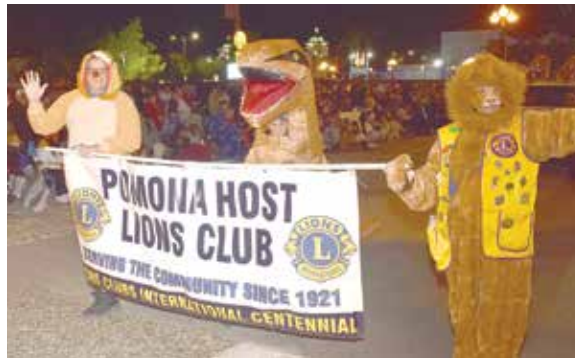
Pomona's American Legion Post 30 -- with a little help from the Chino American Legion Post -- provided the color guard at the front of the parade, followed closely behind by the ceremonial Post 30 Legion Riders on motorcycles. Post 30 was chartered by Congress in 1919 and continues its long-standing tradition of showcasing the flags representing the sacrifices made for freedom.



Those Post 30 Legion Riders -- the ceremonial branch of Post 30 that rides motorcycles in parades, at funerals and more -- looked better than ever in this year's parade -- there were a lot of them, they had a lot of flags from U.S. flags to MIA/POW flags to flags representing branches of the military, and they were loud! And add all of that up and they got a tremendous response from the crowd.



Pomona Optimist Club President Lorraine Canales, at center, with her ever-present group of volunteer kids, helps carry the Optimist banner with members M. Joyce Bakersmith and Rudy Herrera following in the truck.



Members of the Pomona Host Lions Club marched and carried a banner in the parade. That's La Nueva Voz friend Don Martens holding the banner at left. For the names of the others, you're on your own.



NAACP Pomona Valley Branch President Jeanette Royston, at left, waves to the crowd and looks for new members in her membership campaign.



Pictured are the Pomona High School folklorico dancers. We've seen them before but they are worth watching every time.



Pomona Vehicle Parking District Commission Chairman Joseph Mladinov



Long-time Pomona Rotary member John Forbing towers over the parade in the back of the Rotary truck while members Darren Krohn and Jill Dolan ride up front in the cab.



Members of Pomona's Ganessa High School marching band were in good form and sounding good as always!



We're pretty sure these folks marching at the end of the parade were not official entries -- and parade producers at the Downtown Pomona Owners Association did not return a La Nueva Voz e-mail asking if they were on the list -- but parades bring out everybody, even demonstrators making their positions known about the Israeli-Hamas conflict (and one teacher along the parade route with her own comments on pending salary negotiations).



Members of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe of Native Americans rode in the parade with their banner reminding everyone about their annual three-day Pow Wow always held the last weekend of April in Pomona's Tony Cerda Park. And look, there's Tribal Chairman and Chief Tony Cerda riding in the front of the truck! Looking good, Tony.

JUST LIKE HOME! -- Here's a group of parade-goers that really knows how to set things up -- chairs, two 10 by 10 easy-ups, and a propane burner. We're not sure if that was for heating or cooking. And we also were not sure if it was even legal. We asked DPOA if fires along the parade route were allowed, but they did not respond to our e-mail. But Pomona police took a look, had a conversation and asked them to turn it off which they did (but apparently they turned it back on by the time La Nueva Voz walked by with a camera).



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