

# Local

B2 Local reports B3 Editorial & Opinion B4 Obituaries

## EVENTS FOR SENIORS BACK IN PERSON AT NONPROFIT

Jewish Family Services offers meals, classes

BY LAUREN J. MAPP

In the sanctuary of a Del Cerro synagogue on Tuesday, more than a dozen older adults focused on mindfulness and balance during their weekly tai chi class.

Sitting in chairs, they followed as instructor Cassandra Wang led them through movements to gently lift the heels of their feet, relieve shoulder tension and rock their arms as if cradling babies.

In a nearby room, a group of seniors engaged in a hearty discussion of current events, covering everything from international politics and television news to sustainable agriculture and tennis during their hour together.

Both the tai chi lesson and current events group are important parts of programming provided by Jewish Family Service of San Diego at the College Avenue Center, which resumed its in-person programming in February.

For three years, the older adult program — which is hosted at the Temple Emanu-El — had been on hiatus as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Some programming was shifted to a virtual format during the early months of the pandemic, but as the rest of the world reopened, College Avenue Center participants yearned to once again meet in person.

“As the pandemic changed, we heard daily from older adults about how much they missed the community connection at the center,” said Kristine Stensberg, JFS senior director of Aging Service.

While every day of the week includes different educational or exercise sessions, it always starts with a “Cozy Coffee” and tea hour at 10 a.m. and ends with a hot, healthy lunch planned by a dietitian that is served at 11:45 a.m.

Throughout the week, clients can use the time in-between coffee and lunch to participate in trivia on Mondays, current events or tai chi on Tuesdays, a full body chair fitness class on Wednesdays and a music appreciation course on Fridays. Thursday sessions include rotating topics, but sometimes focus on cultural lessons like how to prepare a traditional Passover dish or learning to better use technology.

College Avenue Center program coordinator Carmen Lomeli said the variety of classes paired with socialization and nutrition leads the center’s 128 members to actively participate in the program.

“I hear every day how they feel so happy to be here, happy to engage with their friends,” she said. “College Avenue Center is not only a safe space for people to come and have fun, be engaged, be active, but also to find us, to be a good resource for the community.”

San Carlos resident Maggie Pound, 77, has been a College Avenue Center member since 2019. As she lives alone, the program helps her to get out of the house.

“I don’t have any family local, so this became my family,” Pound said. “I always felt very welcomed here, and it’s a real learning environment.”

Del Cerro resident Raquel Herrera is primarily drawn to the College Avenue Center and JFS at large through her passion for volunteer work, like her visits with an elderly woman who is home-bound.

While in-person services were not available during the pandemic, the 74-year-old

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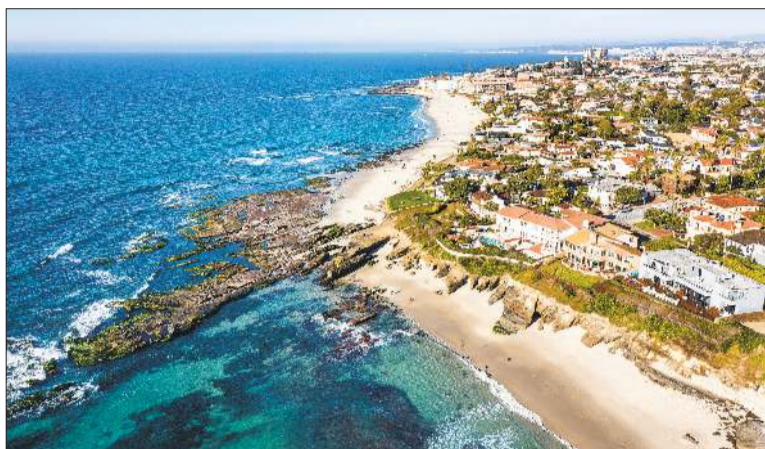
## LEAVING SAN DIEGO?

# LA JOLLA CITYHOOD NOT A NEW IDEA

Concept first explored formally by Independent La Jolla group in 1955

BY ASHLEY MACKIN-SOLOMON & ELISABETH FRAUSTO

The issue of whether La Jolla should secede from San Diego and become a city of its own is back in the spotlight with a new group shepherding the effort. In this series, “Leaving San Diego?” the La Jolla Light, a publication of the U-T Community Press, looks into the requirements for cityhood, the people behind the proposal and the potential local and regional impacts of a city of La Jolla. This first installment explores the history of local secession movements, the issues that have spurred them and why previous efforts failed.



K.C. ALFRED U-T FILE

A 2005 study estimated La Jolla could owe \$4.6 million in annual payments to San Diego for three years if it becomes its own city.

The idea that La Jolla should become a city goes back decades — to the 1950s or beyond.

With unique geography and a driving distance of more than 13 miles from downtown San Diego, La

Jolla has long held an attitude of independence, despite being part of San Diego, according to La Jolla Historical Society historian Carol Olten.

During what Olten calls “great growth periods,” such as the founding of the University of California San Diego in the early 1960s and increasing development that helped lead to San Diego voters’ passage of a coastal 30-foot height limit in 1972, there was renewed interest in La Jolla seceding to become its own city.

“When La Jolla Parkway was cut through in the mid-1960s, there was so much concern about La Jolla becoming more of a part of San Diego because it was easier to get here,” she said. “People worried about losing their isolation.”

The concept of cityhood was first explored in a formal way by a group

SEE LA JOLLA • B4



SANDY HUFFAKER FOR THE U-T

Robert Johnson plays a Native American flute for people at the Mission Trails Visitor Center on Sunday in San Diego.

# FLUTE CIRCLE WELCOMES ALL

Group meets monthly in Mission Trails Regional Park for free jam session; founder eager for new musicians

BY ROXANA POPESCU

## SAN DIEGO

Mission Trails Regional Park was alive with its usual music this weekend: the San Diego River bubbling in its shady bed, birds singing, cyclists zipping by, breeze pressing through trees.

A few extra instruments added to that beauty on Sunday afternoon: Native American flutes, per-

formed by players who gather there once a month on the second Sunday, rain or shine, to bring their music to anyone who will listen.

One is Benny Mullinax, who founded the Native American Flute Circle in 2009. He’d started playing several years earlier. Native American flute, he discovered, was easy to learn. And it was a gateway to serenity.

He’d spent 22 years in the Navy

and then worked in law enforcement. When he came across the Native American flute, he had zero musical training and quickly took to it.

On rough days at work, he’d pull over and play the flute he kept in his patrol car.

“It just let me relax. Everything would go loose,” he said.

The other flutist who came on Sunday — the number of musicians ebbs and flows — was Robert John-

son.

Johnson was already an experienced musician. There’s something about this instrument, he said — something about how it makes him feel.

“Having played clarinet, bagpipes, and even trumpet and so forth, when I picked this up, it seemed to create a natural flow from my heart. That’s the big difference.”

SEE CIRCLE • B2

## RAMONA AMERICAN GRAFFITI CRUISE NIGHTS RETURN FOR 10TH SEASON THIS THURSDAY

Main Street events will feature poker runs, a sock hop, first responder salute

BY JULIE GALLANT

## RAMONA

Ramona American Graffiti Cruise Nights will kick off Thursday by highlighting the 10th anniversary of the weekly event.

Cruise Nights organizer Leroy Clubb said participation has held steady for the past decade. But he said he is optimistic for a robust post-COVID turnout this season.

All types of vehicles cruise down Main Street from Letton to Fifth streets on Thursday nights for the fundraiser for the Ramona Senior Center. Promoters sell T-shirts for \$20 and \$25, hats for \$15, mugs for \$15 and wristbands redeemable for discounts at participating businesses for \$5.

This season the merchandise will feature the 10-year anniversary logo with the words “Cruising R-Town,” Clubb said.

“Last year we raised a little over \$17,000 and from the beginning we’ve raised over \$75,000 for the



RODNEY SMITH

Marvin Bauer drives his 1955 Chevy down Main Street in Ramona during a previous Ramona American Graffiti Cruise Night.

Senior Center,” Clubb said.

“Actually, the first few years were pretty light so most of it came in during the past six to seven years,” he said. “This couldn’t happen without the participation of businesses in Ramona. They’ve been outstanding in donations. You just can’t say enough good things about them.”

Some of the larger Ramona business supporters have been Coldwell Banker Country Realty, Mountain Valley Ranch, Annick Selby Insurance Services and Ramona Disposal Services, he said.

Clubb aims to raise an additional \$25,000 this season, which runs through Sept. 14, to bring the

SEE RAMONA • B4

## \$2.3M GRANT ALLOWS SHARP MARY BIRCH TO JOIN NEONATAL NETWORK

Group conducts clinical trials nationwide to further newborn health

BY PAUL SISSON

## SAN DIEGO

Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women and Newborns is the first hospital not affiliated with a local university to join an influential group of hospitals that has been setting national newborn health policy since 1986.

Part of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Development, the Neonatal Research Network conducts nationwide clinical trials on everything from sepsis prevention to low birth weight, working to establish evidence-based standards for babies that often end up in neonatal intensive care units.

Mary Birch, partnering with sis-

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## LA JOLLA

FROM B1 called Independent La Jolla in 1955. Its mission statement read, in part: "La Jolla is subject to the laws and actions of the city of San Diego, a municipality that has undergone dramatic growth and change in recent years. That growth has increasingly put San Diego's priorities as a city at direct odds with those of La Jolla as a community. La Jolla's very shoreline and skylines are controlled by the San Diego city government. Past decisions made by the city relating to critical qualities of life issues — from land use and historical preservation to environmental impact and municipal services — have reflected a consistent disregard for the stated preferences of La Jolla's 45,000 residents."

That early effort didn't make much headway, but in the early 1960s, a group of residents created La Jollans Inc. and formed a de facto planning group to provide input on local issues and development. In 1966, the group became the La Jolla Community Planning Association, which was formalized when the San Diego City Council approved Council Policy 600-5.

If the arguments for cityhood expressed in the '50s by Independent La Jolla seem familiar, it's because they've continued since then.

According to La Jolla resident Melinda Merryweather, who got involved in

a cityhood effort in the 1980s, "Many of the issues we saw back then are issues we still see today: trash, potholes, slow police response times, cracked streets. It didn't seem like San Diego and La Jolla were on the same page. We wanted to preserve history in La Jolla and San Diego didn't seem to want to."

Merryweather compared the city's oversight to the nursery rhyme "There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe." "San Diego was getting so big that some of its children (communities) were being ignored," she said. "This is our mother city that can't afford to take care of these communities properly. Some of the children are going to go without breakfast or with socks that don't match."

San Diego representatives have not commented about the past or current La Jolla cityhood proposals. The first initiatives ultimately fizzled for lack of funding to pay for the studies required to launch the secession process.

Then in 2000, California's Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act established new procedures in which both a majority of the residents in a community looking to secede from a city and a majority in the rest of the city would have to approve the cityhood plan.

Independent La Jolla came back to life for more than a decade. Fundraising was launched and meetings were held to outline the path to secession. A 2005 study estimated La Jolla could owe



ELISABETH FRAUSTO U-T COMMUNITY PRESS FILE

**La Jolla street problems and the city of San Diego's response in fixing them have long been an issue.**

\$4.6 million in annual payments to San Diego for three years to compensate for loss of revenue should La Jolla go independent.

However, the plan began to go stale because "the city didn't have someone in place that could review the information and issue an informed response in a timely manner," Merryweather said.

Further, the involvement of then-Independent La Jolla member Cindy Greatrex discouraged large donations when she was accused in 2017 of stealing more than \$67,000 in La Jolla Recreation Center funds when she was on the La Jolla Park & Recreation board. She pleaded guilty to grand theft in December 2018.

Nevertheless, in 2019 the cityhood group, under the new name Incorporate La Jolla, made a "substantial step" toward secession by contracting with Sacramento-based Economic &

Planning Systems for a new initial fiscal analysis. But the study never happened as Incorporate La Jolla was unable to raise the funds for it and went defunct.

"We didn't want to take La Jolla out in a helicopter, we wanted to make it better for everyone that comes," Merryweather said. "This is a world-class tourist spot but doesn't look like that anymore. People come here expecting something amazing ... but the city can't give us the maintenance we need. We could make La Jolla much more beautiful and give money back to San Diego. It's a win/win for everyone."

Building off the groundwork laid by Incorporate La Jolla, a new nonprofit group called the Association for the City of La Jolla began private meetings in September 2021 and has been consulting with people in the cities of Del Mar and Malibu. Del Mar incorporated from

San Diego County in 1959 and Malibu incorporated from Los Angeles County in 1991.

"Past efforts allowed us to spring forward," said association president and local urbanist Trace Wilson. The 2005 study "gave us the data to know this is possible fiscally."

The association announced in March that it is officially exploring cityhood and raising funds to complete a new fiscal impact analysis by Richard Berkson of urban economics company Berkson Associates. Berkson also did the 2005 fiscal impact study when he worked for Economic & Planning Systems.

Berkson was hired in September and hopes to finish the new study by mid-summer.

Wilson said this new effort is different from past ones in that "it is a multi-generational, transparent, grassroots effort" with smaller donations coming from more people rather than large donations from fewer people.

"We have raised close to \$55,000 and we have the money to complete the study, but we are also a fairly diverse board of trustees," Wilson said. "We have different skill sets, and that has been helpful. Folks who are passionate about the political side are doing that work, the financial people are doing that work. We have a good base that we are going to build upon."

The Association for the City of La Jolla has seven

board members: Wilson, Janie Emerson, Diane Kane, Mary Coakley Munk, Sharon Wampler, Brenda Fake and Ed Witt, most of whom are leaders of various community organizations in La Jolla. But on this board, they are not acting in those capacities.

Past cityhood efforts were stymied not only by struggles with finances but also by thinking one step at a time, Wilson said.

Thus, the current effort is looking at the next few steps, such as working with the mayor's office to collect data; meeting with the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCO, which helps communities become incorporated; and educating the community "so everyone is on the same page," Wilson said.

"The reason we're doing this is by self-governing we can prioritize projects and focus on the population here," he said.

"This is going to make a better La Jolla for the region. We made that switch of mindset of La Jolla wanting to leave to La Jolla wants to help, and we need to self-govern to do that."

Merryweather said she supports the current effort "1,000 percent. It's the perfect time and the perfect people. This is our chance."

*The next installment in the series will explore the difference between seceding from a city and incorporating from a county.*

Mackin-Solomon and Frausto write for the U-T Community Press.

## NEONATAL

FROM B1 ter facility Sharp Grossmont Hospital, received a \$2.3 million grant to help defray the cost of joining the effort for the next seven years, becoming the only facility to do so in Southern California. Sharp is the second in the state to participate, following Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University.

With more than 7,000 births annually and a massive 84-bed neonatal intensive care unit, Mary Birch handles the largest load of births of any facility in the state, meaning that the research network can find a wide range of potential trial participants in a single location.

Though not an academic

medical center, Mary Birch has its own neonatal research institute, routinely participates in research, including a series of ongoing trials that attempt to prove the benefit of a procedure called "cord milking" that attempts to transfer placental blood to infants after birth before umbilical cords are clamped and cut.

The research network includes more than a dozen centers including Emory and Duke universities, the University of Alabama and University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, the University of Utah, Case Western Reserve University in Maryland and the University of New Mexico Health Science Center.

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## SENIORS

FROM B1 old said she was able to go out for walks around her neighborhood but the isolation was difficult. Herrera has enjoyed being able to once again get together with the friends she's met through the current events group.

"I don't watch the news because it's horrendous, so when I come here, they give me something so I know a little bit about everything that's going on," she said. "It's fun, also, to talk to people my age."

Participants that don't have a way to get to and from the College Avenue Center can use the free JFS On the Go transportation program. Through the help of more than 300 volunteer drivers, seniors can schedule rides to doctor appointments, errands, social activities and more if they live within an eligible ZIP code.

On the Go was a vital service for College Avenue Center participant and downtown La Jolla resident Sharon, who asked to be identified only by her first name.

During the early days of the pandemic, the 77-year-old had just been diagnosed with cancer and required 30 days of hospital visits for radiation treatment. Through the transportation service, Sharon was able to make every appointment and is now in remission.

Because she doesn't have a car, Sharon is picked up by a JFS volunteer about twice a week to travel to the Col-



LAUREN J. MAPP U-T

**Cassandra Wang (facing camera) demonstrates tai chi moves at the College Avenue Center.**

lege Avenue Center.

"Nourishment is so much more than food," Sharon said. "I'm nourished emotionally, socially by coming here, secondary to the food. That's what makes this so special."

Although the College Avenue Center program is held in a synagogue, Jewish Family Service welcomes people of all faiths and cultural backgrounds. The only requirement is that clients be age 60 or older.

To find out more about the College Avenue Center or to register for the program, visit [jfsd.org/cac](http://jfsd.org/cac) or call (858) 637-3270.

lauren.mapp@sduuniontribune.com

## RAMONA

FROM B1 grand total to \$100,000.

"That would be a stretch, but we'll go for it," he said. "For a little town event of cruising around in the summertime it's not a bad deal. It livens up the town on Thursdays."

Cruise Nights run from 6 to 8 p.m. Most of them will be down Main Street but once a month the cars will be routed through Ramona's neighborhoods, alternating between San Diego Country Estates and Ramona proper.

On May 11, drivers and passengers can also participate in a 50-50 drawing. A pot of money will be collected through raffle ticket sales and the drawing winner will divide the pot with the Ramona Senior Center.

On June 8, the season's first once-a-month poker run will be incorporated into the cruise. Drivers and passengers can draw a card at five different stops — three in the neighborhoods and a beginning and end stop at the former K-mart parking lot, Clubb said.

The game is played with a red deck and a blue deck of cards so each car can play with up to two hands for a fee of \$10 per hand. The winning hand gets half the pot and the other half goes to the senior center, he said.

Then on June 22, the Cruise Nights' annual '50s Sock Hop will be held in the Albertsons grocery store parking lot at 1459 Main St. Cruise spectators will be encouraged to dress in '50s attire — from poodle skirts to saddle shoes. They'll dance to DJ music and can buy root beer floats and have their picture taken in a photo booth.

As the summer heats up on July 20 the cruises will feature a First Responders Night with vehicles from Cal Fire, San Diego County Sheriff's Department, California Highway Patrol and others driving up and down Main Street.

Along with the cruises, Ramona American Graffiti Cruise will host a Ramona Senior Center Car Show on April 22. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Grace Community Church, 1234 Barger Place.

Car club members and

other car enthusiasts will display their vehicles in the church parking lot. Entry fees for drivers and spectators will be donations to the Ramona Senior Center, Clubb said. The event includes raffles and a silent auction, free hot dogs and drinks and DJ music.

"We'll be handing out trophies to a dozen different cars," said Clubb, noting that last November's car show raised just over \$7,000. "I'm hoping to raise more, but I'd be happy with the same amount this time. It's kind of like a grab bag. You never really know for sure how much you'll get."

For more information, call Clubb at (619) 980-3647.

Gallant writes for the U-T Community Press.

### Marion Gaddi

July 1940 - January 2023



OCEANSIDE — Marion Carol Cherubini Gaddi, beloved sister, mother, grandmother, and friend, unexpectedly passed away on January 4, 2023, in Oceanside, California, at the age of 82.

Rosary and Candle Service to be held at 6 PM at the Mission San Luis Rey on April 12, 2023, with a Mass to be held at 1 PM at the Junipero Serra Catholic Church on April 13, 2023. In Lieu of flowers, please Donate to Women's Resource Center, 3385 Mission Ave, Oceanside 92054

Dear Marion, Aloha `Oe ~ Until we meet again.

Please sign the Guest Book online [obituaries.sandiegouniontribune.com](http://obituaries.sandiegouniontribune.com)

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