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CERRITOS HIGH GRADUATE AMONG FIRST DOCTORS TO TREAT LAS VEGAS VICTIMS

By Brian Hews and Tammye McDuff

It was an off night at the hospital. Dr. Kevin Menes who grew up in Cerritos and graduated from Cerritos High School told HMG-CN, "It really was a slow night, very quiet, I had only seen a couple dozen patients by 10:00 p.m.

But things would drastically change in the next few hours.

Menes works at Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas, and after graduating from Cerritos High then from UC Riverside with a medical degree, Menes went to Loma Linda University specializing in emergency medicine.

"As an emergency medicine ER doctor you need to know how to do a little bit of everything," he said.

Menes would draw on all his skills that night; Sunrise Hospital was the closest hospital to the recent massacre in Las Vegas.

See **MENES** page 6



LIFE SAVERS: Front (l-r) Kevin Menes, MD, James Walker, DO. Back (l-r) Patrick Flores, DO, Michael Tang, DO. The four work at Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas, Sunrise was the closest hospital to the Las Vegas massacre site. Photo courtesy of Kevin Menes.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTES 4-1 TO DENY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT ARTESIA & SHOEMAKER

By Brian Hews

The Cerritos Planning Commission has denied a proposed housing development by MLC Holdings, Inc. located at the office complex at the corner of Artesia and Shoemaker.

The Commission members are Cerritos residents Tatiana Yokoyama Bui (Chairperson), Jennifer Hong (Vice Chairperson), Deepak "DJ" Jhaveri, James Giordano and Larry Sagert.

MLC proposed to demolish the four existing two-story commercial office buildings and construct a new gated single-family residential development.

The massive development would have been comprised of twenty-nine two-story detached residences featuring

See **CERRITOS** page 10

LA MIRADA COUNCIL MOVING ELECTION DATES

By Brian Hews

The La Mirada City Council, at this past Nov. 14 city council meeting, adopted an ordinance moving election dates and extending the current council's term by 12 months.

The action will move elections to coincide with statewide dates and was designed to increase the turnout at subsequent elections.

The 2017 elections, marred by campaign finance irregularities by current Councilman Andrew Sarega and losing candidate Tony Aiello, produced extremely low voter turnout.

Residents blamed the Sarega and Aiello campaigns for the turnout, as both their campaigns used dirty tactics and extremely derogatory campaign materials never seen before in La Mirada aimed at their two opponents, John Lewis and Pauline Deal.

Lewis beat Aiello, but Deal lost to Sarega, with Sarega massively outspending Deal with money that came from an independent expenditure committee run by La Mirada resident Ionel Imbre.

The committee has been connected to

current 48th Congressional candidate Stelian Onufrie, who's campaign manager is Sarega.

Coordination between an independent expenditure committee and a candidate is a violation of California Fair Political Practices laws.

Both Sarega and Aiello are currently under investigation by the FPPC for campaign finance irregularities connected to the committee that took pace during the campaigns, with both looking at heavy fines if found guilty.

The ordinance moves the 2021 District 1 and 2 elections to 2022 adding one year to Lewis and Sarega's terms.

Similarly, the ordinance moves the 2019 District 3, 4, and 5 elections to 2020, adding one year to Mayor Eng, Mayor pro tem Mowles, and Councilman Steve De Ruse's terms.

La Mirada Mayor Ed Eng told the La Mirada Lamplighter, "The move will motivate greater voter turnout and at the same time, allow time for residents to evaluate the best qualified candidates to represent them."

Councilman John Lewis told the

See **ELECTIONS** page 10

DARK MONEY FINANCING ARTESIA RECALL EFFORT

By Brian Hews

The ongoing recall of Artesia Mayor Ali Taj and Councilmen Miguel Canales and Victor Manalo is being financed by dark money donations and continues to operate illegally and in violation of the Political Reform Act and Fair Political Practices Commission laws.

If more than \$1,000 is spent on any campaign, a committee must be formed and registered with the FPPC so voters can ascertain who is financing and working for the recall.

But, according to the Artesia City Clerk, the proponents of the recall have not filed or opened a committee.

The leading proponents include Artesia residents Rene Trevino and Dorothy Kane, along with Cerritos resident Gurpal Sood.

Local reporter Jerry Bernstein and Cerritos resident Melinda Kimsey are also helping, publishing questionable articles about Taj and the councilmembers in Kimsey's newsletter while leaving off a byline.

Cerritos Fine Arts and Historical Commissioner Janet Beach is also involved in the design of Kimsey's newsletter.

See **ARTESIA** page 7



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World Series champ comes home to Artesia. **Page 2.**



Lakewood's Shepherd Project helps the needy. **Page 4.**



Cerritos Calvary Chapel Preschool's disaster relief fundraiser. **Page 9.**



Loren Kopff's Girl's High School Basketball Preview. **Page 12.**

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CONGRESSMAN LOWENTHAL AND DEMOCRATS ARE 'FIRED UP'

By Larry Caballero
On Politics

Bringing back memories from the 2008 Presidential campaign of Barack Obama, hundreds of community activists began chanting, "We're fired up and ready to go!"

They were attending a Nov. 10 Mobilizing Town Hall meeting hosted by Congressman Alan Lowenthal, at the First Congregational Church in Long Beach, to listen to eighteen Democratic Congressional hopefuls running against four Republican incumbents in Orange County.

"Winning Back the House" was the recurring theme as Lowenthal said, "It's time to challenge the power in Washington." Similar Town Hall meetings were being held throughout the country.

He is worried that strides made in the Obama Administration are being washed away while gun shootings increase, "and all we do is give a moment of silence to the dead and injured."

He believes that climate change is not taken seriously, the Dreamers are worried about deportation, and affordable health care is no longer a sure thing for millions of Americans.

"And I thought, you know, this is all about the 2018 elections where Democrats only need to win twenty-four Congressional seats to gain control of the House. We have some great candidates running, and we just need to stay positive and support them after the June primary.

Midterm elections are important. Maybe none have been more important as 2018. As your champion in Congress, I want to ensure that our voices are heard. This election is all about turning the House from red



Photo by Lou Delgado

Pictured (l-r) California Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell, Democratic candidate Michael Levin, Congressman Alan Lowenthal and candidate Michael Kotick welcomed more than 200 attendees to Lowenthal's Nov. 10 Mobilizing Town Hall meeting as the first step in "Winning Back the House."

to blue."

Lowenthal concluded, "Many of us feel deeply disempowered by the direction our country has taken. But now we have a chance to make a real difference."

He believes there are four vulnerable Congressional Districts in Orange County that could turn blue in 2018:

CA-39-Ed Royce, CA-45-Mimi Walters, CA-48-Dana Rohrabacher, CA-49-Darrell Issa.

"We need your help to win these seats and take back our country."

Lowenthal told more than 200 attendees that the four Republicans attempt to woo moderate voters, by appearing to hold centrist views and distancing themselves from Trump, while still repeatedly voting to repeal Obamacare numerous times and hoping on apathy and low voter turnout to stay in power.

While taking thousands of dollars in campaign donations from the Trump fundraising machine, they have voted in favor of the House's Budget Resolution that ensures the way for Trump's tax plan, that will harm the middle class, while giving large tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. The League of Conservation Voters say that all four Republicans have continuously voted against the environment.

Vice-President Pence recently fundraised for California Victory 2018 on their behalf, and each incumbent received nearly \$100,000 for their 2018 war chest.

Lowenthal asked the candidates to share their vision for the country, and how the attendees can get involved to support them. "We are all in this together."

All of the candidates shared the same theme of bringing needed change to Washington, a commitment to public service, work to pass common sense gun legislation, affordable health care, combat climate change, and provide social and economic justice for all.

The Democratic candidates in attendance in CA-39 were Gil Cisneros, Sam Jammal, Phil Janowicz and Andy Thornburn. Candidates in CA-45 were Brian Forde, Kia Hamadanchy and David Min.

Candidates in CA-48 were Dr. Hans Keirstead, Michael Kotick, Laura Oatman, Boyd Roberts, Omar Siddiqui and Tony Zarkades. Candidates in CA-49 were Michael Levin and Paul Kerr.

All of the candidates encouraged attendees to check out their websites and to get involved in their campaigns.

"You all can make a differences if you get involved and engaged," said Lowenthal.

OLIVE WALK HOMES DEBUT IN LA MIRADA

Olson Homes is debuting their newest Orange County neighborhood, Olive Walk! La Mirada's rich olive oil history is celebrated in this modern-day community.

All are invited to the Model Grand Opening celebration Saturday, November 18th.

The festivities will begin at 11 a. m. until 2 p. m., and attendees will be treated to an array of hospitality including model home tours, a grilled cheese truck, music, and even a balloon artist for kids and kids at heart. Model homes will be open until 6 p.m.

Spanish-style paired and single-family homes will feature up to four bedrooms, three bathrooms, and approximately 2,200 square feet of living space.

Olson Homes prides itself on building homes that are energy efficient and healthy.

Residences will include auto shut-off motion sensors in all baths, automatic fire sprinklers, low E glass, water-efficient toilets, and so much more. Homes will also include an array of personalizing options.

Olive Walk's prime La Mirada location between Downtown L. A. and Or-



ange County offer a host of great options for work and play. Local attractions like Splash Aquatics Center, La Mirada Regional Park, and Knott's Berry Farm.

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HOMETOWN WORLD SERIES CHAMP RETURNS TO ARTESIA

By Larry Caballero

The Los Angeles Dodgers may have been the favorite team in Southern California during the World Series, but more than 200 Artesia residents were willing to cheer for a day their hometown boy, Houston Astros pitcher Chris Devenski, who dropped by Artesia Park Nov. 11 to thank the City where his journey began.

"It all started in '94 at Artesia Park when I fell in love with the sport of baseball," said Devenski. "I want to thank my coaches and my family for never stopping to believe in me as I overcame adversity."

He is a Gahr High School graduate and was asked to explain the term "unleash the dragon" that has been attributed to him, and he said, "It just means that when I'm on that baseball field, I'm going to give it all I've got," said Devenski.

When asked if it was difficult playing against the Dodgers, Devenski said, "It was tough when so many Dodger fans are cheering their team each inning." How does he keep calm during the game? "I chew a lot of gum and stay focused."

It was always his dream as a child growing up in Artesia to someday play in the World Series, and the dream came true. "I'm very thankful for having that experience."

Since Houston had suffered some damage from Hurricane Harvey, Devenski was "always trying to bring smiles on the people's faces."

Devenski was recruited later in life after attending junior college and Cal-State Fullerton,



Photo by Lou Delgado

On behalf of the residents of Artesia, Mayor Ali Taj presented a Certificate to hometown boy, World Series champ and Houston Astros pitcher Chris Devenski.

but "I never stopped trying." He encouraged the young people in the audience to keep practicing and have fun, and "I hope I can be an inspiration to all who think you can't become a winner if you come from a small town like Artesia."

Devenski also promised to catch up with everyone's texts, but "my phone has blown up a couple of times already trying to get back with everybody."

He began playing college baseball at California State University, Fullerton, where he played in 2011 for the Woodstock River Bandits, a collegiate summer league team.

He was drafted by the Chicago White Sox in the 25th round of the 2011 Major League Baseball draft and made his professional debut with the Great Falls Voyagers.

He started 2012 with the Kannapo-

lis Intimidators before being traded to the Houston Astros in August as a player to be named later for Brett Myers.

He started his Astros career with the Lexington Legends. In September he threw a no-hitter with 16 strikeouts. Devenski pitched 2013 and 2014 with the Quad Cities River Bandits and Corpus Christi Hooks.

He pitched 2015 with Corpus Christi and was named their pitcher of the year. He was promoted to the Triple-A Fresno Grizzlies for the playoffs and he pitched seven one-hit innings to help Fresno win the Triple-A National Championship.

Devenski made his MLB debut on April 8, 2016.

He appeared in five games of the 2017 World Series, pitching a total of five innings while allowing four hits and four runs, although he was the winning pitcher of Game 2.

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LAKWOOD ROTARY'S PROJECT SHEPHERD HELPS NEEDY FAMILIES

By Tammye McDuff

Most of us are gearing up for the happiness of hearth and home with the upcoming holiday season. We are buying turkeys to stuff, picking out holiday cards and some are even ahead of the game with gifts for loved ones, already purchased. However, for many the holidays mean a different type of preparation, struggling to budget for a family dinner and to buy presents from Santa for little ones.

Since 1995, children from families enrolled in Lakewood's Project Shepherd (LPS) have hung their holiday gift wishes in the form of paper bear ornaments on Teddy Bear Trees in the hopes of having them filled by an anonymous Santa.

Many of the 2,000 residents that LPS serves during the holidays are families who would not otherwise receive a toy for the holidays.

Beginning Monday November 20, the Teddy Bear Trees will be on display at Lakewood City Hall as well as all the city's parks and community centers.

Visitors may select an ornament with a child's name, age and what they want for Christmas. The community is encouraged to come by any of these trees, choose a Teddy Bear ornament, and fulfill the wish of a child in need.

On Dec. 2nd and 3rd, the Bear orna-



Since 1995, children from families enrolled in Lakewood's Project Shepherd (LPS) have hung their holiday gift wishes in the form of paper bear ornaments on Teddy Bear Trees in the hopes of having them filled by an anonymous Santa.

ments can be returned to the Rotary Club booth in the Center Court at Lakewood Center. Ornaments can also be dropped off at most City of Lakewood facilities during business hours prior to Tuesday, December 5th.

A Teddy Bear Tree will also be on display at the mall during the weekend. Rotary volunteers, many of them Lakewood business and civic leaders, will help mall visitors new to the program choose a paper bear from the tree.

All gifts must be unwrapped and will be distributed to children registered through LPS. Last year, caring Lakewood shoppers filled the Christmas wishes of 635 local kids in need through the Teddy Bear Tree program.

Project Shepherd is operated by the Rotary Club of Lakewood and the City of Lakewood. For more information about Project Shepherd, call 562-925-7512, or visit www.lakewoodcity.org/ProjectShepherd.

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CERRITOS RECEIVES CPRS HEALTHY PLAY INITIATIVE FUNDING

The City of Cerritos has been selected as a funding recipient of the 2017 California Park and Recreation Society's (CPRS) State-Wide Healthy Play Initiative. The initiative was created as a partnership between CPRS and GameTime, a leading manufacturer of commercial playgrounds, custom play spaces and outdoor fitness equipment.

As part of the initiative, GameTime made a commitment of up to \$2 million in matching funds for CPRS agencies that submitted applications for assistance with the development of playground spaces that encourage best practice designs for active behavior. The City of Cerritos was one of 24 funding recipients selected this year. The specific funding award will be determined once a playground design is completed, and will not exceed the \$60,000 allotment for Loma Park playground equipment identified in the City's Capi-

tal Improvement Program for fiscal year 2017-2018.

The City of Cerritos will use the funding to install an enhanced playground structure at Loma Park. The new structure will promote physical fitness and socialization and incorporate six key elements into the design: balancing, spinning, brachiating, sliding, climbing and swinging.

"We are honored to receive this valuable funding that will allow us to make improvements to one of our community parks," stated Cerritos Mayor Grace Hu. "By selecting the City of Cerritos as a funding recipient, CPRS is recognizing our continual efforts to enrich the lives of our children and to contribute to building communities through play."

Each of the playgrounds funded by the initiative will be designated as National Demonstration Sites for data collection, which will be used to highlight best practices and outcomes achieved.

Founded in 1946, CPRS is a nonprofit, professional and public interest organization with more than 4,000 members statewide. Its mission is to be the best source of resources, tools, advocacy and events to strengthen California's public parks and recreation industry.

CERRITOS CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING EVENT NOV. 20

The City of Cerritos will hold its annual Christmas tree lighting event on Monday, November 20 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Cerritos Civic Center.

The free event will feature entertainment by local music groups, carolers, children's crafts and fun for the entire family. Santa Claus will be available for photo opportunities, and residents are encouraged to bring their cameras. The Cerritos City Council will light the City's Christmas tree at 6 p.m.

For more information, call the Community Participation Division at (562) 865-8101.

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'POWER HOUR' HELPS PARENTS AND PRIMES KIDS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS



Pictured are students (left to right) Elenoa Hafoka, Sydney Malary, Evelyn Pistulka hard at work during "Power Hour," a time set aside for homework implemented for the first time this school year at The Youth Center's After School Program.

By Laurie Hanson

More parents are given peace of mind after hearing their children finished their homework thanks to The Youth Center's After School Program's "Power Hour," implemented for the first time this school year.

"We aspire to alleviate the stress parents experience upon coming home and their child still having to do homework," Youth Center After School Program Director Jay Martz said. "Parents have been requesting it and we delivered."

Every weekday in the main room and the homework room at The Youth Center, the first 45 minutes are set aside for "Power Hour," where kids can get their work quietly done while even collaborating with other classmates. The main room is ideal for kids to work on group projects. Kid's without homework can either spend time reading a book or go outside to play. Incentives and rewards are given kids who complete their homework.

Three staff float around helping the kids with their homework, and kids can get additional help by raising their hands, according to Martz. After "Power Hour" in the homework room kids can get further assistance from a staff member if they need additional time and support. In the homework room, The Youth Center has support resources available including school textbooks, WiFi and printing capabilities, art and other supplies to help them complete their assignments.

"Power Hour" is a time where staff actively collaborates with kids on their homework problems," Martz explained. "Many of our staff members are attending college to become teachers so it is a great experience all the way around."

"Although it has taken some time for the kids to adjust to 'Power Hour,' they now seem to appreciate time designated to getting their homework done," he said. "It will hopefully condition the kids to complete their homework immediately after school and not have to worry about it later on that night."

For additional academic help outside of "Power Hour," The Youth Center offers professional one-on-one tutoring for TK-8th grade students through their S.C.H.O.L.A.R.S. program (Supporting Children with Homework or Literacy for Accelerated Results and Success). Fees are \$10 per half hour with sessions available Monday thru Friday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. at The Youth Center.

LAKWOOD'S DASH PROVIDES VITAL TRANSPORTATION TO RESIDENTS

Staff Report

The City of Lakewood, CA may have won 'Playful City USA for 7 years', but it holds another notable distinction; helping the city's older adults with DASH complimentary transportation.

DASH is a benefit to all residents in Lakewood 60 years or older or with disabilities.

An older adult can schedule their transportation one week in advance. They are guaranteed not only on-time service, but dispatchers and drivers who are empathetic to the requirements of their passengers.

They are greeted by name, helped with any paramedical equipment and treated by positive personalities that reach out with caring support.

Lakewood resident Mary Josephine Guzzetta is a disabled septuagenarian who salutes them. "They are absolutely above and beyond...the best. The service is so important to me because of my combined 'lilliputian' Social Security/SSI, and guarantees that I am not isolated which can lead to depression, a leading cause of senior mortality."

"I call on them three times a week,

"said Guzzetta, " twice for the extremely low cost ABC Adult Line Dancing Class vital for exercise taught by Stuart and Jesse Shepherd."

Guzzetta also travels to the Palms Bridge Club, the free Cypress senior center line dancing, bridge hosted by the Cerritos Senior Center and the Jewish Community Centers, weekends for Sunday mass at St. Peter Chanel's in Hawaiian Gardens and a few of Lakewood Saturday mini travel excursions.

Ms. Guzzetta said, "Lakewood's wise and empathetic consideration for seniors is a vital reason for their economic stability."

"They are a role model that should be imitated by every city, I am grateful and proud to call Lakewood my home."

The city's DASH transit service is free to Lakewood residents 60 years of age or older without their own transportation and to disabled residents of any age. Users of the service must meet some eligibility requirements.

DASH is a reservation-only service that travels in and around Lakewood. For help in becoming a DASH rider, call 562-924-0149.

SENATE BILL 1 MANDATES 6-INCH WIDE HIGHWAY STRIPING

In this Caltrans News Flash, you get an up-close look as Caltrans transitions from 4-inch wide stripes to 6-inch wide stripes on the state highways, providing motorists with a better view of the road in darkness or inclement weather such as rain, snow and fog.

A key step in the process is adding reflective beads to the paint, which reflect a small amount of the vehicle's headlights

back to the driver – making the stripe readily visible. The new striping will also make it easier for autonomous vehicles to "see" the lines and stay in their lanes.

This new striping program is just one of the many projects which have been accelerated thanks to Senate Bill 1, which will invest \$5.4 billion a year to fix California's transportation system.

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SAINT IRENAEUS CATHOLIC CHURCH NOEL NIGHT

Saint Irenaeus Catholic Church is having their annual Noel Night Concert on Friday, December 1st.

This free concert will feature sing-along carols, soloists, and Christmas favorites performed by the Youth, Teen, and Adult Choirs - all accompanied by talented instrumentalists.

Doors open at 7:15 p.m. Concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

All are welcome to this festive and spiritual event being held inside the church at 5201 Evergreen Avenue in Cypress.

MENES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Menes recalled most of the staff hanging around the front desk 'just joking around' when a call came in stating there was a mass casualty shooting.

"We get these fairly often," said Menes, "more often than not, it is a false alarm and nothing happens."

A police officer had been standing by near the staff, and Menes could overhear the officer's radio chatter; it was different than other calls.

Menes is a volunteer medic for the Las Vegas S.W.A.T. Team, so he grabbed his own police radio to listen to the calls, only then he realized this was not a false alarm.

Menes said, "Instead of bothering the

officer, I went down to my car and grabbed my police radio. I heard the words 'automatic gunfire' and 'concert' ... I knew this was serious, because the concerts we have here are big."

Menes realized that the ER was likely going to receive hundreds of victims.

The emergency room immediately went into action; all doctors were called into the emergency.

Within minutes, the ambulance bay became full of gurneys and wheelchairs, "You could hear the sirens in the distance get louder and louder, the first vehicles to arrive were the police cruisers, there were sometimes five injured in the police vehicles," recalled Menes.

The hospital has a 'tag' system that will let staff know what stage the victim is in from non-life threatening to deceased. There was a 'station' for each color tag. Placing each victim in the correct station is critical and multiple doctors often check patients in order to verify injuries.

As medical doctors of the ER, their sole function is to stabilize or bring victims back to life and then hand them over to specialized doctors.

"Initially it was the police vehicles that were dropping off victims, then the ambulances loaded with casualties, and then injured people were arriving in the back of pickup trucks," said Menes.

"They were regular folks who were bringing in victims literally by the truck load, Uber drivers and taxis were also transporting the injured."

"I had less than ten seconds to analyze each person that came in."

The amount of injured placed great stress on the system. Victims were going through triage, into surgery, being tagged as non-critical and then unexpectedly crashing.

Menes interned in Detroit for three years, "I learned how to deal with all types of gunshot wounds. I was working over 120 hours a week, in order to learn you have to be present at the hospital." That experience likely saved several lives.

"At one point there were three or four patients crashing at the same time. I told the nurses to bring all the patients over into one area and put the gurneys' into a circle around me, with their heads facing inward ... like a flower."

They all received drugs or oxygen or whatever it was they needed, in order to keep everyone alive. After stabilizing each person, they were sent to a trauma surgeon, to decide who would go into the operating room next.

Between 10:30 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., Menes saw over 250 patients. In the first few hours he did 28 surgeries - 58 surgeries in 24 hours - finally totaling an astounding 83 surgeries.

"It was a tragedy, my colleagues and I did the best we could, hopefully we saved some lives."

Nevada's Lieutenant Governor recently awarded Sunrise Hospital with a Certificate of Merit and letter of gratitude for heroic actions during and immediately following the Mandalay Bay Massacre.

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BUY-SEE PAGE 10

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2017 ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION!

Join us on December 18th and celebrate the holiday season and enjoy, dinner, silent auction, your neighbors, and guest speakers;

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& other Community Leaders.

The HHHDC Holiday Party will be held at:
Josephine's Bistro and Bar

Plaza 183
11305 183rd St.
Cerritos, CA 90703
6:00pm - 9:00pm

Tickets \$35 per person & \$60 per couple

Please RSVP by Friday, December 15th to HHHDC Co-President Larry Caballero; democab@ca.rr.com

CALVARY CROSS CHAPEL PRESCHOOL'S DISASTER RELIEF FUNDRAISER



Teachers, children and staff of Calvary Chapel raised over \$842 for their relief fund.

By Brian Hews

Teachers, staff, and children of the Calvary Cross Chapel Preschool have a lot to be proud about after holding their Hurricane/Earthquake Disaster Relief Fundraiser and raising over \$842 with their Penny Drive.

The small non-profit private preschool and extended day care organization has served the community for over 42 years and currently has 54 full-time/part-time preschoolers and 24 extended day students.

Children were asked to help by bringing in pennies, change, even dollars, basically whatever they wanted so they could send it to the Red Cross to help the families.

The Penny Drive lasted the whole month of October with almost every family participating. Teachers donated, with even a stranger, who saw the kids cashing in the pennies at Stater Brothers, donating \$10 on the spot.

Calvary will be thanking all of their students by having a cupcake party Friday Nov. 16.

KAISER PERMANENTE'S 9TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY BOX OF LOVE PROJECT



Dr. Rowena Javier (center) with Yolanda Herrera, Michael Abdelhadi, Becky Stout, Viviana Ramirez, Jesadhel Alaba, Rebeca Panameno, Betty Avena, Claudia Flores, Jeanette Amezcuita, Norma Sanchez, Yesenia Banda. Photo by Tammye McDuff.

By Tammye McDuff

Each year Kaiser Permanente Physicians and staff partner with Canning Hunger to provide Boxes of Love as their holiday food project to families in need. The year, Kaiser distributed more than 1,400 boxes.

Jesadhel Alaba Aragon, LVN II of the Cerritos Medical Offices told HMG-CN, "The reason I support the box of love initiative is because there was a point in my life when times were tough and it was hard to make ends meet. God sent good people my way to help me get through it. We give whole-heartedly as a family because we have experienced firsthand the kindness and goodness of friends. My wish is by our humble donation, we are able to give hope and comfort to those in need."

Canning Hunger was founded in 1992 when founder Norman Whan saw a local food bank that was out of food. Whan grabbed some non-perishable items and asked his neighbors to do the same thing; Canning Hunger was born that day.

Canning Hunger has spread to all 50 states, with thousands of volunteers conducting neighborhood food collections that have resulted in millions of meals for hungry families in America.

Muaweya Abdelhadi, Manager of Kaiser Administration Services added, "It is always very important to help others when needed. Most of us have been there at one point and most of us were also helped at one point. It is always good to pay it forward when you can. There are a lot of families in our community in need."

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ARTESIA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Weeks ago an expensive robo-call hit Artesia, frightening residents while talking about the "lack of safety" along Pioneer Boulevard.

One week later, a recall signature-gathering event was held in front of the Flame Broiler in Artesia, which is reportedly owned by a recall proponent.

Recall signature gatherers have been seen in front of Stater Brothers market in Artesia asking for signatures to get the recall initiative on the ballot and also have been going house-to-house in Artesia.

Finally, long-time recall campaign manager Chris Robles was seen at the same Flame Broiler; Robles is known to work with local trash haulers in recall campaigns.

Robles was also seen with Kimsey and Kane posting legal notices pertaining to the campaign.

All this indicates that the recall campaign has likely exceed \$1,000 in expenditures, which triggers the FPPC reporting requirement.

Each violation carries a maximum \$5,000 fine.

It is additional strong evidence that the recall aimed at Taj, Manalo, Canales, is a blatantly corrupt movement with unknown motives that has exhibited graft and corruption from the very beginning.

Trevino and Sood submitted their "Notice of Intention to Circulate Recall Petition," with what they said were valid signatures in May of this year.

But according to Taj, Canales, and Manalo, the petition contained fraudulent signatures and signatures that were obtained by false statements.

The three, with their allegations, accused Trevino of fraud, forgery, and perjury.

And other Artesia residents backed those allegations.

On May 23 HMG-CN reported that the recall campaign was invalidated due to questionable signatures.

Many residents on social media confirmed what HMG-CN published, that Trevino and Sood were misleading residents to get them to sign the petitions.

Now the campaign is illegally skirting state finance laws in receiving dark money.

Texts into Trevino, Kimsey, and Bernstein went unanswered.

HAWAIIAN GARDENS AND CERRITOS HONOR VETERANS



Pictured (l-r) Council persons Reynaldo Rodriguez, Myra Maravilla, Mayor pro tem Barry Bruce, former Mayor Mike Gomez, Councilwoman Mariana Rios and Mayor Hank Trimble. Photo courtesy city of Hawaiian Gardens.



Honoring Veterans are, pictured (l-r), Cerritos Councilman Frank Yokoyama, Mayor Grace Hu, Mayor pro tem Mark Pulido, and Councilmen Naresh Solanki and Jim Edwards. Photo courtesy city of Cerritos.

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NORWALK SNOWFEST AND TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

The city of Norwalk will be having a Snowfest and tree lighting ceremony Saturday, December 2 from 12 noon to 8 PM. There will be snowslides, food booze, face painting, snow play area, arts and crafts, and stage entertainment. The tree lighting ceremony and Santa Claus visit will begin at 6 PM. For more information call the Recreation and Park Services de-

partment at 562-929-5702. Residents are encouraged to bring a new unwrapped toy to "stuff a bus." Help the Transportation Department stuff a bus, all toys collected will be donated to the Social Services Department Angel Tree Program. The special bus will be at Norwalk City Hall lawn from 12 noon to 8 PM on Dec. 2.



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Join us to learn about new Medicare benefits for 2018. PIH Health is here to help you select the best Medicare Advantage plan that fits your needs. This event will include a lecture about benefit changes in 2018, as well as an opportunity to speak with representatives from the Medicare Advantage health plans accepted by PIH Health. We hope you can join us!

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9 am to 12 pm

PIH Health Hospital - Whittier
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Please RSVP by Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Call 1.888.365.4450 or visit
PIHHealth.org/Medicare

Space is limited and reservations are required.



*The value is per booking and equals the total inclusions and member benefits listed. †Rate is per person, land only, based on double occupancy for check-in on May 1, 2018. ‡Kids stay free in same room as adults using existing bedding. Occupancy limits apply. ‡Activity voucher does not apply to air/car only booking. Valid toward the purchase of a select optional activity. Not valid for hotel direct activity bookings. Minimum five night stay at participating AAA Vacations properties required. For Mexico, Hawai'i, and all other Caribbean destinations, \$100 value in activity vouchers is combinable with standard member benefit activity voucher of \$50, totaling \$150 value in activity vouchers per booking maximum. Activity voucher does not apply to air/car only bookings. Valid toward the purchase of a select optional activity. Not valid for hotel direct activity bookings. Must be booked by December 31, 2017 with travel complete by December 31, 2018. Minimum five night stay at participating AAA Vacations properties required. Unless otherwise indicated: rates quoted are accurate at time of publication, & are per person, based on double occupancy. Airfare, taxes, surcharges, gratuities, transfers & excursions are additional. Advertised rates do not include any applicable daily resort or facility fees payable directly to the hotel at check-out; such fee amounts will be advised at the time of booking. Rates, terms, conditions, availability, itinerary, government taxes, surcharges, deposit, payment, cancellation terms/conditions & policies subject to change without notice at any time. Other restrictions may apply, including, but not limited to baggage limitations & fees, standby policies & fees, non-refundable tickets & change fees with pre-flight notification deadlines, & blackout dates. Fees & policies vary among airlines. Contact airline directly for any details or questions. Advance reservations through AAA Travel required to obtain Member Benefits & savings which may vary based on departure date. Not responsible for errors or omissions. Your local AAA Club acts as an agent for Pleasant Holidays®. CTR #1016202-80. Copyright © 2017 Auto Club Services, LLC. All Rights Reserved.



MARIO SIBAJA'S 'THE CORN' OPENS AT STAY GALLERY

By Ana Godinez
Stay Gallery Curator

Stay Gallery, Downey's premiere art gallery, alongside sponsor Amapola, welcomed artist Mario Sibaja November 10th during the opening reception of 'The Corn - The True Pre-Hispanic Treasure and some Aspects of Pre-Hispanic Life.'

The hosts held a private event before opening the doors to the public. The guest list included Mayor Pro-Tem Sean Ashton, Downey Kiwanis President Michael Chirco, President of the Board of Education of the Downey Unified School District Martha Sodetani, and owner of Porto's Cuban Bakery Betty Porto. The guests were welcomed by speeches from Stay Gallery Curator Ana Godinez followed by one of the gallery's biggest supporters, Carlos Galvan Jr. owner of Downey Amapola. After thank you speeches, the guest artist, Mario Sibaja had the opportunity to talk to the public about his artwork.

Throughout the night, corn was present in a majority of the art that was on display, the table décor, and in the food that was catered by Amapola. Appetizers included a corn and mushroom vegetarian ceviche served with corn chips, chicken and corn tamales, and corn baked desserts. Drinks were also available to accompany all the dishes.

Sibaja was first introduced to Stay Gallery in the summer of 2017 through Carlos Galvan. Sibaja was born and raised in Oaxaca, Mexico. His artwork has been showcased all over the county including: Los Angeles City Hall, Hollywood Bowl, Million Dollar Theatre, and Long Beach Convention Center. He often depicts artwork portraying important aspects of



Pre-Hispanic culture, believing that the story behind the painting should be just as important as the painting itself. For this exhibition, Sibaja chose to highlight agriculture, especially corn, as a treasure. He painted his characters as powerful people interacting with earthly elements and playing with jaguars, juxtaposed with images of Mayans with fruits and vegetables. Sibaja seeks to inspire his audience in hopes of raising appreciation and respect for the Pre-Hispanic culture.

Mario Sibaja's art stands out because of the carving in his work. His work begins with months of research on the topic he wishes to depict, sketching numerous drafts, and once he finalizes the imagery, he draws it out, carving in his drawing to create depth. Sibaja then adds bright colors that are typically found in Mexican paintings topped with a glossy varnish. His paintings vary in size, complexity, and price range.

Stay Gallery would like to thank Carlos Galvan of Amapola for his sponsorship, which included an extremely generous donation of \$5,000. This donation will allow the Gallery to continue their mission



Guests listen to Downey Mayor Pro-Tem Sean Ashton at the private opening.

of civilly engaging the community through art and culture. These monies will also be used during the Stay Young 2018 Season, which dedicates ten weeks to student programming, exhibitions, and art festivals. If you did not get the opportunity to attend

the opening reception of 'The Corn,' the art will be on display through Mid-December. Stay Gallery is located at 11140 Downey Avenue, in the city of Downey, or visit www.staygallery.org for more information.

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CERRITOS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“enhanced architectural detailing in a variety of traditional architectural styles.”

The four and a half hour meeting only addressed the development, and over twenty residents came to the meeting to voice their opinion at public comment.

The owner of MLC also spoke at the meeting. In the end the Planning Commission denied the project - to the complete surprise of the owner of MLC.

Lawyers for the City will now draw up formal documents for the next Planning Commission meeting in order to make the denial of the project “official.” After the formal denial by the commission, the owners of MLC will have a chance to appeal the decision to the Cerritos City Council.

Chair Yokoyama Bui, Vice Chair Hong, Commissioners Jhaveri and Giordano voted no, with the lone yes vote coming from Sagert.

Chair Yokoyama Bui told HMG-CN, “We evaluated the project based on staff reports and residents’ concerns, we accommodated the developer on a number of issues but in the end we just felt it was too many homes for the area.”

HMG-CN reached out to Lester Tucker of MLC Holdings for comment, but Mr. Tucker could not get his comments in before publication.

ELECTIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Lamplighter, “My basis for voting for the move from March of odd years to the new primary date of March in even years is that the move makes California more

relevant in the national primaries and other elections. In the past the California primary was in June and the candidates were already narrowed down to one or two by the time California voted. Now, in a March primary, the voter turnout has a possibility of being higher than the general election as most everyone will be backing a candidate for the primary election date wherein in the general election in November, only two of the main party candidates will be running and if a voter’s candidate didn’t win in the primary, they may not show up in November. Therefore, March has a potential for bringing out more voters.”

City officials said that the mailers notifying voters of the change will cost about \$10,300 and is a one-time cost.

Consolidating the elections should save the City about \$40-\$50,000 per election.

LA's Drive for Homeless Count Needs Volunteers

Los Angeles wants to enlist volunteers for the 2018 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, scheduled January 23-25, 2018.

The goal is to exceed the 2017 total of nearly 8,000 registered volunteers.

“The Homeless Count would not exist without the selfless participation of thousands of volunteers across the County,” said Rabbi Farkas. “I’m optimistic that once again people will answer the call to help their neighbors experiencing homelessness.”

Volunteers may register at www.they-countwillyou.org.

For more information visit www.lahsa.org.

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CIF-SS DIVISION 8 FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS : VALLEY CHRISTIAN'S DEFENSE CLAMPS DOWN IN FIRST ROUND VICTORY

By Loren Kopff
@LorenKopff on Twitter

Valley Christian High's football team ended the 2017 regular season averaging an even 45 points per game while its defense allowed less than 20 points a game. Against Riverside-based Notre Dame High in the first round of the California Interscholastic Federation-Southern Section Division 8 playoffs last Friday night, the Crusaders had to rely on their defense more than their offense.

V.C. was held without an offensive touchdown in the second half while the defense forced three third quarter punts and held the Titans on downs three times in the fourth quarter in a 28-13 victory. The Crusaders got just a 45-yard punt return from senior Jaylon Tucker with 1:32 left in the third quarter for the only points by either team in the second half. Still, the game was a vast difference from V.C.'s 12-0 win over Notre Dame last season in the Division 9 semifinals.

"A lot more offense," said V.C. head coach Woodie Grayson of the rematch. "I don't think we played as well as we could have offensively. They had a really, really good player defensively that gave us trouble for most of the half. We found a way to get a little separation with a couple of big plays and a special teams play. Our defense pitched a shutout in the second half. So, it was a different score but every bit as intense and every bit as physical as it was last year."

Defense set the tone real early as Notre Dame's Aaron Cooper recovered a fumble and the Titans turned that into a one-yard score from Kavon Fulgham. Later in the quarter, V.C. senior defensive back Garret Williams intercepted a Mac Fennell pass.

After both teams traced punts, the Cru-

saders (9-2), ranked fifth in the division, tied the game on a 39-yard run from senior wide receiver Quory Smith. The Titans would regain the lead early in the second quarter on a 41-yard field goal from Jun Hwang. But V.C. took the lead for good when Williams caught a short one-yard pass from senior quarterback Isaac Joseph.

The touchdown ended a drive that lasted over four and a half minutes and was aided by a pass interference call on Notre Dame. But facing third and goal from the one-yard line, Grayson called a timeout to set up the play.

"We had a different play called and they were in a defense we didn't want to see for the play call that we had," Grayson said. "So, we had to get out of that play and go to a safer play because they were going to blitz those guys up the middle and we had a QB run up the middle designed."

V.C. then got the edge it needed when senior Josh Akrofi recovered an onside kick from senior kicker Chris Dupuy and four plays later, Joseph ran it in from seven yards out for a 21-10 lead. The Titans responded by going seven plays in nearly three minutes. But two illegal procedure penalties limited the Titans to another 41-yard field goal from Hwang.

"Our special teams coordination, coach [Kirk] Diego, does a good job of identifying holes in the kickoff returns," Grayson said. "All year long, we've taken chances on squibs or short right and left kicks and seeing if we can get down and get a turnover. He saw something tonight and it worked in our favor."

"The big difference [from last season's game] was their receivers," Smith said. "Last year, they had one guy who was getting all of the passes. This year, they have multiple guys who were getting

all the passes. So, that was the big thing we had to cover tonight. I just had to step up and tell the other corner he had to do his job this year because last year, I stepped up and we won that game."

While the Crusaders were held to 184 yards of total offense in the first half, only four plays went for double-digit yardage. Besides Smith's touchdown, he also gained 34 yards on one carry on the drive that produced the Williams touchdown. Also on that drive was a 12-yard gain from senior running back Darian Green. For the game, V.C. picked up 156 yards on 41 carries. Smith led the team with 82 yards on five carries while senior running back Gianni Hurd was held in check at 47 yards on 13 touches.

"It was a really tough game," Smith said. "I had to step it up a notch because it's the playoffs. We had a couple of guys who got injured, so I had to step my game up and tell the other guys to be quiet because it was getting a little crazy out there."

"Q's explosive," Grayson said. "He found a couple of seams a couple of times and scored the one big play and then changed field position on another. So, those were big plays for us."

In the second half, the deepest the Titans would get was the V.C. 11-yard line early in the fourth quarter. However, the drive stalled after a sack from junior defensive lineman Sam Range and three straight incomplete passes by Fennell. However, the Crusaders ran 10 plays in the fourth quarter and crossed midfield once in the second half.

"I think the game was really decided in the first half," Grayson said. "We did manage to come out and put a touchdown on the board in the second half with a special teams play. But both defenses played really well; ours was just a little bit better

in the first half."

Throughout the game, mostly in the second half, both teams stepped up their physical play to the point where Green was ejected with less than 30 remaining in the third quarter on an illegal blocking call. Hurd and Smith were dinged up a bit in the contest as was Fulgham, who led the Titans on the ground with 29 yards on 14 carries.

"I'm a little disappointed in the chippiness," Grayson said. "We are a senior-dominant team and we should know better. Last week there was some chippiness, but our kids handled it the right way. They channeled it into their play. This week they decided to handle it the wrong way. It turned what should have been a more comfortable victory into a challenging night."

"Because of the penalties and the chippiness, this team stayed in the game longer than they should have," he continued. "That's how you get guys hurt, that's how you have to play longer. We could have come out and played clean and put a couple in the end zone early in the second half. You know, 35-13 is a whole lot different than 21-13 for most of the game."

Senior defensive lineman Jake Leue led V.C. with eight tackles while Range and Williams each added seven tackles. The Crusaders will host fourth-ranked Antelope Valley High tonight, the eighth home game in their last nine playoff games since 2015.

"It was nice not to have to travel last year," Grayson said. "Obviously this is a different year. But you know, it's nice because this division is so spread out. Not to have to drive to Antelope Valley on a Friday night is going to be huge. For them to have to come down and make that drive... we'll see how they handle it."

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2017-2018 GIRLS BASKETBALL PREVIEW

VALLEY CHRISTIAN HOPES EXPERIENCE WILL SEND TEAM BACK TO DIVISIONAL FINALS

By Loren Kopff
@LorenKopff on Twitter

It was as good as a season one could expect from Valley Christian High, which advanced to the Division 4AA finals. Now the Lady Crusaders are looking for back to back trips to the finals since the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 seasons. Cerritos High hopes to stay at the top of the Suburban League again in its final season in that circuit while Whitney High says adieu to the Academy League.

ARTESIA PIONEERS

6-18 overall last season, 0-12 in the Suburban League, seventh place

Head coach: Shontya Pouncey (third full season, fourth overall 18-85)

Team's record previous five seasons: 19-106

Last time made the playoffs: 2012

STARTERS LOST: SR Cesilia Cabrera (7.8 points per game in 15 games last season), Samantha Cruz (3.4 ppg), Taryn Davis (2.9 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Jessica Tibayan (3.5 ppg.), SR Cassidy Valle (10.5 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Jada Mouda
TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: SR Kim Servin, JR Kathy Gonzalez, JR Odalis Ramirez (transfer from Paramount High), SO Tina Labib

The 'what could have been' line will be flowing throughout the Artesia High program season as senior Cesilia Cabrera, who was the team's best rebounder and defensive player, won't be back. Still, head coach Shontya Pouncey is looking to be competitive and looking for growth as well as his younger players stepping up and all the guard play to be tougher. He says the focus is not the playoffs, but simply competing in every game that they're in.

"A bunch did happen," Pouncey said of last season. "The positives are the kids we have back are really about Artesia basketball. We lost one that was going to be a big loss but the kids who are here really worked hard and trained hard. We had a lot of different things going into this year, like the weight room was incorporated from spring until now. And then [there is] more of a college atmosphere as far as working out."

The Pioneers now have had five straight seasons of single-digit victories and either a sixth or seventh place finish in league. Without Cabrera, Artesia will look to seniors Jessica Tibayan and Cassidy Valle to take control of the team. For the Pioneers to be in a lot of games, both will have to score more than they did last season, maybe double their scoring production.

"Cassidy makes the ship go," Pouncey said. "Without her, obviously we don't move. I'm not going to say the sun rises and falls on her. But she is by our best player, easily hands down. She's very skilled and we got her pretty good. Now, I think she's a lot better but time will tell with her playing every minute of a game."

The team will be very small in terms of numbers. Senior Jada Mouda, the only other returner, was sidelined with injuries some of spring ball, some of summer ball and half of fall camp. Pouncey is hoping she can give the team quality minutes. Junior Kathy Gonzalez is considered as the X-factor and the season will go as she goes.

"We have a team of eight, we have to keep the injuries low and we have to try to rotate bodies as much as possible," Pouncey said. "Limiting, obviously minutes for everybody, kind of balances it out."

CERRITOS LADY DONS

17-10 overall last season, 11-1 in the Suburban League, co-league champions, lost to Thousand Oaks 44-42 in the Division 3AA

second round playoffs

Head coach: Marcus Chinen (fourth season, 54-29)

Team's record previous five seasons: 89-46

Last time missed the playoffs: 2011

STARTERS LOST: Ifeoma Okoli (9.7 points per game last season), Teresa Torres (6.2 ppg.), Cailey Vitug (11.6 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Tracy Nakamura (5.2 ppg.), JR Lindsay Fujihira (6.5 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Allyson Hayakawa, SR Kalea Trias (3.1 ppg.), JR Hannah Carroll, JR Alyxe Tamaki

TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: SR Melody Fu, JR Cindy Hantragoon, JR Iris Lee, JR Jenna Ono, SO Siera Barnett, SO Alyson Chang, SO Kamsi Okere, SO Kari Orr, SO Minh-Thy Vo

For the second time in three seasons, Cerritos head coach Marcus Chinen had a team win at least a share of the Suburban League crown. A basket her or a basket there and the Lady Dons are in the quarter-finals for the second time in four seasons.

"It was a good year for us," Chinen said. "I wish we could have gone farther in the playoffs. We had a really good game against Mayfair the first time around. The second time around it was another good game; an exciting game. I think that's what it's all about-the competition. It's fun going up against Mayfair or even the other teams in our league for a league title."

With Chinen entering his fourth season, he doesn't have any holdovers from the previous regime, under the tutelage of Ariel Adams. But, what he does have is an experienced group that can chase down Mayfair, as always, and hopefully winning league outright in the final season for the Lady Dons as Suburban League members.

"It's exciting," Chinen said. "We came in and taught them half court offenses and what not. But pretty much the run and gun thing is what I would like to do. What Ariel did well with [her players], we've tried to continue with it. Now that it's a new group, or if you want to say, our own, I think our whole style can change completely."

Senior Tracy Nakamura will be called on to do a lot more, maybe run the point, maybe run the two-guard or a combination of both, according to Chinen. The same goes for junior Lindsay Fujihira as she and Nakamura should average double digits in scoring. Look for senior Kalea Trias to be a major force on the glass despite Cerritos not being tall this season. Cerritos will have a good mix of seniors and underclassmen, which means the cupboard shouldn't be empty after this season.

"It's going to be a different group," Chinen said. "We're going to call upon them to be our leaders, maybe if they don't start, at least be the leaders off the court because they're the ones with varsity experience."

"That's going to be a challenge," he later said of returning two starters. "We're going to have to see what we can get out of our newcomers as well as our returners. We're going to look for Hannah Carroll; hopefully she can score a few points for us. Maybe on defense she can steal a ball and get a lay-up. We're really working with her on her shot."

The Lady Dons will again have a very challenging December schedule, including a return trip to the Marina/Edison Tournament and a single game at North Torrance High. The league title could be on the line on Feb. 8 at Mayfair High, the last Suburban League game for Cerritos, which has

won four of them since moving over from the Mission Valley League.

"It's going to be really sad because I think the league that we have right now is very competitive and helps us out," Chinen said. "I'm not going to say that the new league is going to be worse than what we're doing right now. I think the new league is going to be pretty competitive and I'm hoping we'll be really competitive."

GAHR LADY GLADIATORS

15-12 overall last season, 5-5 in the San Gabriel Valley League, tied for third place, lost to Pacifica/Oxnard 51-49 in the Division 3AA second round playoffs

Head coach: Rob Godwin (third season, 27-26)

Team's record previous five seasons: 73-65

Last time missed the playoffs: 2014

STARTERS LOST: JR Hannah Kumiyama (4.4 points per game last season, transferred to South Carolina), Alana Soltis (7.8 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Naomi Ellis (12.1 ppg.), SR Kimya Oliver (5.1 ppg.), SR Dezirae Smith (5.2 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Angelina Jacobo, SR Nori Smith, SO Clarissa Heredia

TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: SR Kaylynn Mabin, JR Claindre Francisco, SO Kayla Miyake, SO De'aja Newburn

Gahr High had another decent season, the fourth straight campaign it has either been three games above or below .500. Head coach Rob Godwin said the loss to Pacifica High from Oxnard in the California Interscholastic Federation-Southern Section playoffs brought the team together rather than separate them. The girls understood that they had to work harder to be successful once they get to the playoffs.

"Overall last season, I felt we could have done a little better moving towards the league part of the season," he said. "But I was proud of the girls. We worked hard, we got to where we wanted to, which was the playoffs. I think [the playoff loss] was a learning experience for some of the other girls moving on to the second round. So now they got to see last year what kind of time and work you have to put in practice to be a successful team."

This season, the Lady Gladiators are solid with half a dozen returning players, all of whom got extensive playing time, and have more than half of their team as seniors. Seniors Naomi Ellis, Kimya Oliver and Dezirae Smith have the potential to average at least 10 points a game and in fact, are expectations set forth by Godwin. He says the coaching staff expects each one of those girls to be able to produce offensively this season.

"We're looking for a big year out of all three of those girls," Godwin said. "I believe they know what we expect out of them They're working hard and they're all leaders right now in practice trying to get the younger girls up to speed."

Dezirae Smith and senior Nori Smith are two of the best defenders on the court while Godwin is expecting a lot out of sophomore Clarissa Heredia. He's also looking for junior newcomer Claindre Francisco to give Gahr a spark on defense while another varsity rookie, De'aja Newburn, could be a force in the rebounding area.

The Lady Gladiators will be battle tested as they will participate in the Brea Olinda Tournament to begin the season and will also play in the Southern California Holiday Classic in San Diego at the end of December.

"I just wanted to actually step up the competition so it can prepare us for league," Godwin said. "I went out on a limb and put us in a lot more harder tournaments than

we've done in the last few years."

JOHN GLENN LADY EAGLES

3-22 overall last season, 2-10 in the Suburban League, sixth place

Head coach: Ruben Guerrero (first season)

Team's record previous five seasons: 25-105

Last time made the playoffs: 2011

STARTERS LOST: Sauriyanna Harrison (3.2 points per game last season)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Dalilah Mendoza (8.9 ppg.), SR Kaylin Meno (1.8 ppg.), JR Berenice Santana, SO Dominique Harrison (3.4 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: JR Paola Ramirez (2.4 ppg.), JR Jessica Valdez

TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: JR Denise Cardenas, JR Mariah Chavez, SO Mercedes Rubi

It's been a rough go for John Glenn High, which has finished in sixth place in league for six straight seasons. Former Whitney High boys coach and last season's Glenn's boys coach will take over for Christina Hernandez as the school's fourth girls head coach in the past 20 seasons.

"We're excited as a staff to be working with the girls," Guerrero said. "They're some great kids that are hungry to learn. We've had a few fall games together which I was pleasantly surprised of how hard they played. Effort shouldn't be an issue this season."

Guerrero said he watched the Lady Eagles play last season even though they looked like they weren't tapping into their full potential. Since he took over for Hernandez, he came in with an open mind giving the girls a chance to make a first impression on the coaches.

Even though the Lady Eagles have struggled for the past six seasons, they have experience on their side for the new campaign. Four starters return with senior Dalilah Mendoza potentially scoring 10-15 points a game and according to Guerrero, is a tough presence on the court. As far as the rest of the returning starters, Guerrero says senior Kaylin Meno has developed her game a bit and is expected to be more of a leader on the court. Junior Berenice Santana will help a lot on the defensive side and has a knack for rebounding while sophomore Dominique Harrison has put some time into her game and is noticeably aggressive on the court.

Juniors Paola Ramirez and Jessica Valdez are the other returning players with the former having the energy and stamina to carry the team if she needs to.

The top three newcomers will be juniors Denise Cardenas and Mariah Chavez and sophomore Mercedes Rubi. Guerrero says Cardenas adds depth to their post position and is looking to move her to the perimeter to make her a multiple threat. Chavez adds hustle and toughness to the team and will help Glenn's defensive game while Rubi, new to the school, has experience playing basketball.

The Lady Eagles don't figure to be in the playoff mix this season, their last in the Suburban League, but if anything, the underclassmen can continue to get stronger and get valuable minutes for when the team moves into the 605 League next season.

"They have all the intangibles to make a run at league title," Guerrero said. "They just have to believe in the team. My expectations for this team is whenever we are on the floor, we have to always be competing."

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NORWALK LADY LANCERS

11-13 overall last season, 5-7 in the Suburban League, tied for fourth place

Head coach: Ashley Baclaan (second season, 11-13)

Team's record previous five seasons: 64-67

Last time made the playoffs: 2015

STARTERS LOST: Melanie Arias (4.8 points per game last season), Destiny Hurtado (4.6 ppg.), Crystal Lambey (11.8 ppg.), SR Alyssandra Lopez (3.0 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Bjanka Torres (7.1 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Angie Aldana (6.9 ppg.), SR Fatima Gomez, SR Blanca Ortiz, SR Lizbeth Ruiz, JR Destiny Goodloe, JR Annie Valele

TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: JR Priscilla Martinez, JR Alexis Molina, FR Brianna Flores, FR Ariel Garate, FR Leilani Torres

For the longest time, Norwalk High was the laughing stock of the Suburban League, finishing at or near the bottom for several seasons. Then the Lady Lancers made eight straight trips to the playoffs. Now, the program has been absent from the postseason for two seasons. However, head coach Ashley Baclaan is very optimistic that her team can finish in the top four in the circuit and get back to the playoffs.

"Last season was pretty good," Baclaan said. "I think we had a lot of games that showed great teamwork and growth. I think especially towards the end, they started to understand what they needed to do individually in order to make it work as a team setting."

One thing going against Norwalk is the fact that senior Bjanka Torres is the lone returning starter. However, the team returns six other plays and all of them got extensive playing time. Because of that, most of the other returning players can be starters at any time. Torres figures to be the top player and a double-digit scorer but look for senior Angie Aldana to also score more than 10 points a game.

"She's a senior guard and even though it's technically only one returning starter, I think a lot of the players who came off the bench last year were just as much in that type of [starting] position," Baclaan said of Torres. "I just try making it to where [the returners] just understand opportunities and just capitalizing and trying to be efficient as possible, whether it's seconds to minutes that they get," Baclaan said. "I think that's just the way it has to work in order for us to compete."

Lately, the Lady Lancers have been a middle of the road team in league where they have beaten the teams they should and lose to the teams that are solid locks for the playoffs. Experience should give the team an edge in possibly cracking the top three and if so, get back to the

playoffs.

"I hope so," Baclaan said of getting to the playoffs. "I always hope we can. It's not so much like it's a bitterness or anything. That's just what happened for our squad. That's where you just look back at some of the games where it's like, ah, you had it at some point or you could have had it."

VALLEY CHRISTIAN LADY CRUSADERS

22-10 overall last season, 5-3 in the Olympic League, second place, lost to Village Christian 49-29 in the Division 4AA finals

Head coach: Dominic Freeman (fourth season, 50-36)

Team's record previous five seasons: 62-77

Last time missed the playoffs: 2015

STARTERS LOST: Cheyenne McKinnie (16.6 points per game last season), Sahana Oglesby (6.0 ppg.)

STARTERS RETURNING: JR Calla Anderson (7.5 ppg.), JR Ariel Gordon (6.3 ppg.), SO Kira Smith (4.6 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Janelle Basic, SR Victoria Coloruotolo, SR Jai'Lynn Parham, JR Abby Leffler, JR Kiara Paul, SO McKenna Bushong

TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: FR Faith Boss, FR Jordan Ibarra

Before last season, the last time Valley Christian advanced to the divisional finals, the team won 24 games. The 20-win mark seems to be the benchmark for a possible trip to the finals and the Lady Crusaders did that last season. A very strong December paved the way for a good, not great, Olympic League season and obviously a superb playoff run.

"Other than beating Village, that would have been nice," said head coach Dominic Freeman. "We beat them once, but we didn't beat them when it counted. I would say, reflecting back, what a tremendous season. The girls really put so much work and effort into their craft and to get to that point and that far...I think it was more fun just how we got there and the journey as far as the travelling and the extra days of practice."

V.C. is still young but very much experienced with three returning starters. Yes, the Lady Crusaders lose leading scorer Cheyenne McKinnie. But juniors Calla Anderson and Ariel Gordon and sophomore Kira Smith all have the potential to exceed the scoring output from McKinnie alone.

"It definitely hurts us when you lose two key starters," Freeman said. "Obviously with Cheyenne and her firepower that she brought and her intensity and Sahana with her growth that she brought in...those three years that she played with me. But those three returners-Calla, Ariel and Kira, I saw another step in their

maturity level between Calla and Ariel. They've done just a tremendous job in helping with their leadership this year. So, you mix in maturity and growth and man, it's going to be really special."

In addition to the returning starters, the Lady Crusaders return five players, most of whom got extensive minutes last season, plus junior Abby Leffler, who was called up for the playoff run and performed quite well. The Lady Crusaders are primed for several more successful seasons due to the diversity of its personnel. A return trip to the championship game is definitely not out of the realm.

"It's made my job easier this year," Freeman said. "The girls will tell you, I haven't screamed at them once all summer and fall and we've given them more days off than you can imagine. They've worked so tirelessly. When you have that corps group coming back and they know what to expect, it's a lot easier."

WHITNEY LADY WILDCATS

15-12 overall last season, 6-6 in the Academy League, fifth place, lost to Knight 44-40 in the Division 4A Quarterfinals

Head coach: Jeff Day (sixth season, 84-45)

Team's record previous five seasons: 84-45

Last time missed the playoffs: 2010

STARTERS LOST: Nicole Lee (12.1 points per game last season)

STARTERS RETURNING: SR Caitlin Cheung, JR Christine Hamakawa (8.1 ppg.), JR Kiana Sanchez (3.4 ppg.), JR Justine Wu (6.8 ppg.)

OTHERS RETURNING: SR Deja Forest, SR Eirene Sebastian, JR Joanna Macaraeg, JR Valaree Villegas, SO Janelle Ho (3.0 ppg.)

TOP VARSITY NEWCOMERS: FR Kim Hosada, FR Julianna Lee, FR Makenna Yokoyama

Four times in the past six seasons, including three under head coach Jeff Day, Whitney High has reached the quarterfinals before seeing its season come to an end. But the Lady Wildcats have also combined to go 38-36 in the past three seasons. The two questions for this season will be can Whitney be better in the regular season and if they are, can they finally advance one step closer to a possible date in the championship game?

"It's been my M.O.," Day said. "We're always a little above .500, we play a tough schedule. I think our December helped us in league. Every team ahead of us in our league was ranked at one time or another in the top four in their division. We gave Oxford [Academy] two good games and once again, we have to beat them. We split with Crean Lutheran; Crean Lutheran goes on and makes it two wins away from the state

finals in their division. Sage Hill is the only one who has had our number the last three or four years."

From 2010-2014, the Lady Wildcats were dominant because of Rachel Nagel. The past four seasons, it was the Nicole Lee show. Now, the team will have find a way to establish some offensive consistency and with four starters coming back, it shouldn't be too difficult. Junior Christiane Hamakawa is the closest to being a vocal leader on the court, according to Day. But as the shortest player on the court, she's probably the team's best perimeter shooter.

Whitney will have more depth this season, but Day predicts the scoring should be about the same, which is in the low 40s.

"With Nicole, I didn't have a lot of people around her," Day said. "She basically was the only girl in her class. I have [nine] returners who have multiple years of varsity experience, primarily as far as playing time in my junior class. And then I have my two bigs who are seniors."

Seniors Caitlin Cheung and Deja Forest will complement each other and will sub each other out while junior Justine Wu and sophomore Janelle Ho could be the big surprises this season. One positive for the program is the fact that it had more girls show up in the summer and they played about the same amount of games but did more done together as a team than ever before, and Day said that was way beyond where he has ever been before while at Whitney.

"I think Christine and Justine...their numbers are going to go up a little bit I think," Day said. "And then I'm looking for Janelle to be a bigger part of the offense."

The Lady Wildcats will be put to the test early as they will play 14 games in 20 days from the first of their San Marino Tournament games to the last of their Valley Christian Tournament games. Then, Whitney won't play from Dec. 18 until Jan. 3. This will also be the final season of the Academy League with Feb. 8 at home against St. Margaret's High the final league contest.

"I liked that it was all pretty much, with the exception of Crean growing and growing and growing, small schools," Day said. "I'm going to miss that because now, we're going in with the big Cerritos and schools that are going to be at least one and half to two times our size. As a basketball coach, when I found out, I was unhappy as far as the basketball part of it. I would rather have stayed with the league we were in."

GAHR, VALLEY CHRISTIAN FOOTBALL SQUADS GET SET FOR TOUGH QUARTERFINAL GAMES

By Loren Kopff
@LorenKopff on Twitter

Round two, a.k.a. the quarterfinals, of the California Interscholastic Federation-Southern Section playoffs begins tonight with a pair of area teams facing tougher challenges on their quest for a divisional championship. Gahr High, the third place representative from the San Gabriel Valley League, is seeking its first trip to the semifinals since 2007 while three-time Olympic League champion Valley Chris-

tian High is looking to win a second straight divisional crown.

DIVISION 8

4 Antelope Valley High (9-2) @ #5 Valley Christian (9-2)-The Crusaders are in for a battle with the tri-Golden League champs. Coming off a 28-13 win over Notre Dame/Riverside High last Friday in which the offense produced just over 200 yards, V.C. takes on a squad very similar to itself. The Crusaders are a scoring juggernaut, piling up 478 points while the defense has allowed 203 points. Senior running back Gianni Hurd leads the ground game with 1,237 yards and 16 touchdowns. Senior quarterback Isaac Joseph has tossed 28 touchdowns and only three interceptions.

The Antelopes have scored 402 points while giving up 152 points. Quarterback Caden Hinton has thrown for 2,073 yards



From left to right: Cerritos High softball players Kiarra Crockett-Pope, Kristina Mendez and Jennifer Morinishi recently signed letter of intents to play college softball.



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