

HIDDEN MEADOWS

January 2025

NEWS

Vol 9 No 1



Fire Station 3 and Volunteers

Hidden Meadows Toys for Tots

By Pat Tanabe/Resident

The Toys for Tots program was established by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in 1947. This program collects new, unwrapped toys and distributes them to less fortunate children during the holidays. The Toys for Tots logo was designed by Walt Disney in 1948 and includes a three-car train. In its over 70-year existence, the Toys for Tots Marines and volunteers have distributed 677 million toys to 301 million children. The Hidden Meadows Community has been supporting this event for over 23 years. This private event is sponsored by the Hidden Meadows Community Foundation. Hidden Meadows residents embraced the cause, donating a wide range of toys, from stuffed animals to edu-

cational games, ensuring that every child would have a special gift to unwrap. The community filled 12 Toys for Tots boxes which contained about 720 individual toys!

The toy collection boxes were available to fill at various Hidden Meadows locations (Side Yard Public House, The Meadows Deli, HomeSmart Reality West, Boulder Oaks Golf Club, Fire Station #3, The Market at Hidden Meadows and Circle R Fire Station) during the month of November. The Toys for Tots Drive Event was a festive gathering where families could come together to drop off their donations. This year, the event was held in the Homesmart parking lot. As families arrived, they were greeted by DinoSanta & his elves, with a warm atmosphere filled with the aroma of freshly brewed

coffee & hot cocoa. Attendees enjoyed a selection of pastries and fruit and a hot cocoa bar with toppings and mix-ins (catered by

The Market at Hidden Meadows), creating a cozy environment for neighbors to connect and share in **TOYS** See Page 6



Couple Donating Toys



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Santa's Volunteers



Top 3 Best Parks to Walk Your Dog near Hidden Meadows

By Logan Monteiro / Resident

I am happy to say that last year we were finally able to adopt a dog. After being a professional dog walker for a year now, my family was finally able to get a dog of our own. We waited for the right time and the right dog. We adopted not just any dog but a beautiful German Shepherd named Max. Max came to us out of the blue and fell perfectly into our family. I learned to make homemade dog food and I am now getting a lot of exercise.

Max has been a great inspiration to get outdoors and discover some hidden gems in the Escondido area. He walks with us almost every day. We go to the beach, out to eat and for long drives up to the mountains to go hiking.

Since my family and I have been walking Max daily, I thought I would share some of our great treks with you. I based these parks on the idea of their orientation towards families. I mean let's face it, if you have kids you probably have a dog or if you don't have children, you are a dog mom/dad.

Hopefully this article will make you aware of a few dog/kid friendly places that maybe haven't been on your radar.

Now in no particular order: The 3 best parks to take your dogs:

Walnut Grove Park:

This is a great place to walk your dog because of all the trees and trail that covers the periphery of the soccer field which many people use to play with their dogs. This trail continues out of the park towards a great nature area. You also see a lot of people not only walking dogs, but riding

horses and lots of families in the large grassy areas. On the weekends you can even watch the soccer games while you are out with your dog. This park is a great place for those who want a good mix between a rural and a suburban environment.

Daley Ranch Park

This park is great if you want a bit more of a wild environment. There are a few hiking trails to choose from. Overall it is a great place for those who want to hike on a rustic trail surrounded by oak trees and wildlife. A large coyote scampered away as we entered the parking area. Although, we do not recommend walking here alone as it is quite secluded.

There were lots of cars in the parking lot but no one to be found on the trail that day.

You are required to remove your pet's waste. I found no dog poop stations anywhere so make sure you (BYOPB) Bring Your Own Poop Bags!

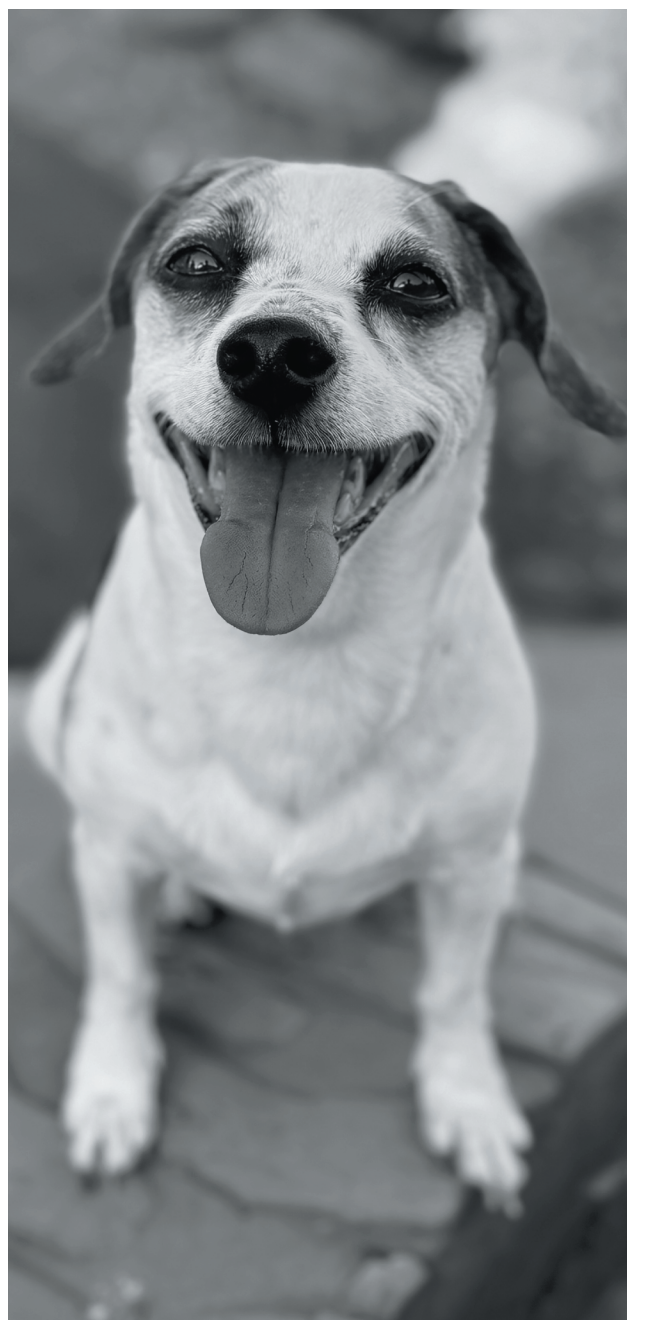
Kit Carson Park

Off of Bear Valley Parkway and nestled in some quaint neighborhoods, we have Kit Carson Park. This park is such a gem and once I drove through the entrance, I remembered going here years ago to visit the sculpture garden. This place is definitely something special.

This Park is a great place to walk your dog and take your kids as there are many different trails, picnic areas, a playground and even a few small lakes. They are: Eagle Scout Lake, Duck Lake and Tree Lake. There is also a section of the park called Queen Califa's Sculpture Garden and is a great place to take your little ones as the artwork there is extremely imaginative and alluring for

anyone under the age of 100. All I needed was an espresso bus and I would be in heaven.

So get outside, get some exercise and bond with your amazing dog



Community Shines at Hidden Meadows Seller's Faire

By Michelle Zipse / Resident

The annual Neighborhood Seller's Faire was a resounding success on Sunday November 17, 2024, with the venue buzzing as 60 vendors showcased their goods and services. The vendors were diverse with a number of different products and services for the interest of our community members. This highly anticipated event has become a cornerstone for the community, bringing neighbors together for a day filled with excitement, discovery, and camaraderie.

Among the many highlights of this year's Faire were the mobile eye clinic and the knife sharpener, both of which drew consistent crowds. The mobile eye clinic provided valuable on-site eye exams, a convenience that many attendees greatly appreciated. Meanwhile, the knife sharpener kept blades in tip-top shape, demonstrating the practical appeal of this community-focused event.

Another highlight of the day was the scavenger hunt, which proved especially popular among children. All five prize winners were thrilled to receive their well-earned rewards, a testament to the effort and care put into creating a delightful experience for our youngest participants. Special thanks go to Christina for her creativity in crafting beautiful prizes and for generously sharing her delicious treats.

Looking ahead, the Foundation Board is already brainstorming ideas for 2025 events. Over the coming months, plans will take shape to continue building on this year's success. Look for the first Seller's Faire of 2025 around April. Dates will be announced in the coming months.

None of this would have been possible without the invaluable support of our community. Your enthusiasm, dedication, and participation are what make events like the Seller's Faire truly special. From all of us on the organizing team: thank you for making this day unforgettable!

Please check out the neighborhood events as well as the Seller's Faire at our community website: HiddenMeadowsFoundation.org



BOOK REVIEW

By Lynn Clark

“To Die For” A 6:20 Man Thriller by David Baldacci

Travis Devine's life has become complicated. As a former Army Ranger with a military career that has some hidden secrets, he has been pulled into some situations by the FBI as a “go to man” to get the job done. He also seems to have attracted some unwanted attention from someone that is trying to kill him. The problem is he can't determine whether or not it is his own government that is trying to do the job, or an unknown woman that might be a foreign agent that he has faced off with in previous books.

Now he has the task of delivering a 12 yr. old girl to her uncle, a former army buddy that is now a known criminal and awaiting trial. Her uncle has become the sole surviving member of the girl's family because her parents have both died from a drug overdose. The girl insists her parents were not drug addicts, and in a surprise move the government drops the charges against the uncle. Why? Devine starts to investigate.

TOWN & COUNTRY PLUMBING REPAIR



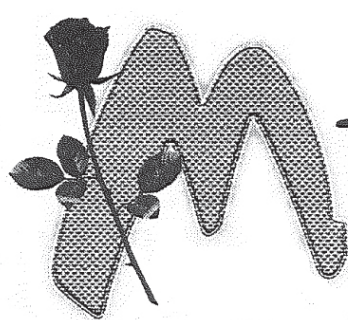
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SUBMIT CONTENT

Deadline for local article submission:
20th of the month for the next issue. Photographs submitted for publication should be hi-resolution (300DPI), unmodified originals, jpeg format. We cannot accept photos taken from social media sites such as Facebook. Email content and photos to Patricia Fox
LocalEditor@HiddenMeadows.news

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Garden Club Members

Garden Club December Meeting – December 2024

By Idalia Rewar

HO-HO-HO MERRY CHRISTMAS!

It was a sunny beautiful day for members of the Hidden Meadows Club to get away from wrapping presents, baking, cleaning, shopping, commitments, etc. and get together and head to Kim Marin's lovely home for our December meeting. As we approached the door we were eagerly greeted by her little dog, Buddy. He was so happy to see a room full of people and could not help himself welcoming each member with a bark.

The meeting was held to discuss the changing of the guard and the year ahead. This will take effect with Melissa Mitchell stepping out of her position as Co-President and Pat Tanabe (the current Club Treasurer) filing that spot. Kim Marin will continue as Co-President making it a successful and easy transition. Our thanks to Melissa for all the hard work and time spent in actively helping the Garden Club these past two years.

Present was Stephanie Corio, who is now a new member of our group. Welcome Stephanie!

Rich Marin, (Kim's husband), spoke on his and Kim's meeting with Pat Tanabe and her husband Joe to explain the benefits of the staggered Co-President model of governance. He also spoke of his and Joe's idea of the need to have more participation from the members, suggesting ideas such as hosting a meeting, planning activities, actively recruiting new members, coordinating an event, and/or donating funds to support our on-going events. As a result, increasing engagement by all members will maintain the continuity of our successful garden club.

Kim led a discussion of suggested Club activities for 2025. Everyone offered suggestions, offering ideas on cost, feasibility, availability, time, etc. Some suggestions:

- January: A Master Gardener to lecture on roses. So apropos – I have 4 rose bushes that really need some TLC – their growth is stunted, so maybe after the lecture they might grow to be teenagers, and mature to adulthood.
- February: another Master Gardener on the topic of viniculture;
- March: Tour the San Diego Botanic Garden;
- April: Flower Fields in Carlsbad;
- May: another Master Gardener topic TBD;
- June: Seller's Faire – Diane Heath suggested providing an activity for the kids that do come to the Seller's Faire.

More details to come as the year progresses. The meeting adjourned to the kitchen to participate in some holiday cheer.

Many thanks to Kim and Rich Marin for hosting the event, to Melisa Mitchell for her admirable continuous work for the club, to those that contributed goodies, and to all members for attending.

If interested in joining HMGCC, get in touch with Kim Marin at kimgroggmarin@gmail.com

Prop. 36 becomes law

Proposition 36, which passed with 68% of the vote in November, officially became law Wednesday, December 18 in California.

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan said her office is committed to successfully implementing the transformational proposition in partnership with the Sheriff, county's police chiefs and the community.

This proposition addresses three key public safety issues plaguing our communities:

Repeat retail theft affecting small and large businesses and impacting the safety of their employees and their customers.

Fentanyl and methamphetamine dealers who are poisoning individuals across the county and fueling crime.

Untreated drug addiction and related behavioral health issues causing overdose deaths that disproportionately impact a substantial portion of persons who are homeless.

The new law provides stricter consequences for repeat theft offenders, those who are committing smash and grab retail crimes, and organized theft rings, which will stop the cycle of recidivism.

The new law will also require convicted dealers of fentanyl and hard drugs to receive a warning that the next time they sell illegal drugs and someone dies, they will be held responsible for a victim's death.

The law provides additional consequences for illegal drug dealers who cause great bodily injury or death. Importantly, the new law incentivizes lifesaving treatment for defendants suffering from addiction by mandating treatment as an alternative to incarceration, addressing the root cause of many crimes.

To prepare for Prop. 36 to take effect, the DA's Office has been training law enforcement officers across San Diego County about the new laws, collaborating with the San Diego County Sheriff and police chiefs throughout the region, conducting internal trainings for prosecutors, meeting with criminal justice stakeholders, working with business leaders in the region, consulting with the California District Attorneys Association and brainstorming with other district attorney offices across the state to leverage best practices to effectively implement the new law.

"It's a new day for the rule of law in San Diego County and California," DA Stephan said. "I call on retailers and the community to report theft because unlike the last 10 years, the law now provides for increased consequences for repeat criminals. Educating San Diego County, which is the second-largest county in our state, about Proposition 36 and the balanced, common-sense solutions it brings has been worthwhile, leading this proposition to pass with an overwhelming majority and creating a clear mandate resulting from the will of the people."

Fifth District Supervisor Jim Desmond added, "Without safety, we don't have a functioning society. Proposition 36 is our chance to take back our state from the rampant drug use and crime plaguing our communities, urban areas, and businesses. This measure tackles the fentanyl crisis head-on by increasing penalties for trafficking and dealing, sending a clear message that we value the safety and well-being of our residents above all else."

With Prop. 36 now in effect, businesses in San Diego County can take proactive steps to maximize its impact,

including:

Reporting crimes and educating employees on aspects of the new laws.

Investing in surveillance that can better document crimes and training employees on how to document evidence and the losses suffered.

Engaging with law enforcement, encouraging them to collaborate with local authorities to stay informed about solutions available under the new law.

Uncertain effect on Escondido business

The Hidden Meadows News asked Escondido Downtown Business Association President Alex MacLachlan his assessment of the new law: "Well, it's very hard to say how the implementation of Prop 36 will affect the business climate in Escondido, because it's only one step in the right direction after ten years of going in the wrong direction in Sacramento and having those bad policies imposed on Escondido's leadership. So taking five steps back and then one forward still leaves us four steps back from where we used to be.

MacLachlan continued, "Then there is the well publicized reality of rogue district attorneys and prosecutors, mostly in our largest cities, who negate the will of the California voters and undermine our local law enforcement by not charging or prosecuting criminals for the crimes for which they were arrested."

He added, "And don't forget, it took us ten years to get to Prop. 36 after being deceived by Prop. 47 in 2014, which was actually allowed to be called the 'California Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act'—which essentially decriminalized stealing up to \$950 in goods from California small businesses and residents and only be charged with a misdemeanor if caught."

The DBA president concluded, "So yes, we had a small win in November's election, but until we have a LOT more wins on policy and political balance over the next two election cycles, the same people who created and introduced 'Porch Pirates,' 'Homeless Encampments,' and 'Smash and Grabbers' into the Californian lexicon will continue to be in power to thwart the will of the California voter in their demands for law and order solutions from the State House instead of ideological zealotry at the head of every State agency. You have to elect people to fire those people, so bad ideas become a source of shame again, not continue to be a badge of honor at cocktail parties in hollowed out business districts of San Francisco and Los Angeles."

San Diego County Sheriff Kelly Martinez said that in anticipation of the passage and implementation of Prop. 36 the Sheriff's Office has provided regional law enforcement with guidelines on charges that will be accepted for booking. Generally, all felonies are bookable offenses and will be accepted at local jails. Individuals with two convictions for theft and certain drug crimes can now be charged with a felony offense for a new theft or drug case.

"I encourage business owners who have become discouraged with a lack of accountability related to theft crimes, to call law enforcement when they are victims of these crimes in order to hold suspects accountable," Sheriff Martinez said. "Public safety is our primary mission, and all members of the Sheriff's Office will continue in our commitment to work with our communities and keep them safe."

Opinion

As we turn our attention to 2025, we must ask a critical question: What's next for SANDAG?

By JIM DESMOND

The November failure of the half-cent sales tax initiative, designed to fund public transportation projects, was a pivotal moment. It underscored a growing public sentiment—SANDAG has lost the trust of San Diego County residents.

In the past year alone, the agency has faced profound internal turmoil. Its top leadership, including the CEO, interim CEO, CFO, COO, and Chief Legal Counsel, have all either resigned or been dismissed. Additionally, SANDAG has been entangled in a toll collection scandal on the 125 freeway, an issue it sought to conceal from both the public and its own board.

Beyond these controversies, SANDAG's track record speaks volumes. The half-cent sales tax approved in 2004, which will remain in effect until 2048, was intended to deliver critical improvements to highways such as I-5, SR-78, and SR-67. These projects were meant to alleviate congestion and improve transportation infrastructure across our region. Yet, 20 years later, these promises remain unfulfilled. Our highways remain clogged, our communities underserved, and we are left paying a tax for another 23 years with little to show for it.

Despite these challenges, I believe there is hope. SANDAG is at a crossroads, and this moment presents an opportunity to reset and refocus. It's time for the agency to fulfill its man-

date and serve the entirety of San Diego County—not just the city center.

Moving forward, SANDAG must prioritize transparency, accountability, and equitable solutions that work for everyone. This includes:

1. **Delivering on Past Promises:** Completing long-overdue projects that voters were promised in 2004.

2. **Addressing Regional Needs:** Ensuring that investments benefit all parts of the county, from urban centers to suburban and rural areas.

3. **Rebuilding Public Trust:** Establishing clear communication and demonstrating a commitment to fulfilling its mission.

San Diego County deserves an agency that works for its people—one that balances investments in public transit with the needs of our highways and roads. Together, we can ensure a future where our transportation infrastructure meets the demands of our growing region.

Let's work to rebuild SANDAG into the agency it was meant to be: a true advocate for all of San Diego County.

Jim Desmond is a member of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. He represents the 5th District, which includes Escondido, Valley Center, Pauma Valley, Palomar Mountain and much of the Backcountry.

Valentine's Day weddings, appointments now available at Assessor's Office

Jordan Marks, San Diego County Assessor-Recorder-County Clerk (ARCC), has announced that early appointments are now available for civil wedding ceremonies between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Valentine's Day, Friday, Feb. 14, 2025.

Couples can book their Valentine's Day appointments for marriage licenses and ceremonies at one of four ARCC offices, including Chula Vista, San Marcos, Santee and the San Diego Downtown ARCC headquarters at the County Administration Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego.

The Downtown location also offers indoor ceremony rooms or a picturesque, outdoor marriage arbor on the waterfront.

The ARCC San Marcos branch office is located at 141 East Carmel St.

The ARCC office is responsible for issuing marriage licenses, birth and death certificates, as well as registering business names and recording all legal real estate documents. On average, the ARCC office provides nearly 25,000 marriage licenses and performs more than 11,000 weddings annually.

However, Valentine's Day is historically one of the busiest and most popular days of the year for same-day marriage licensing and civil ceremonies, according to Marks, a county-wide elected official who serves as county commissioner of civil marriages in his role as San Diego County ARCC.

"Valentine's Day 2025 will be extra special this year because it falls on a Friday, allowing for a weekend of fun for the newlyweds," said Marks. "Happiness begins here at my County Clerk Office for hundreds of couples looking to tie the knot on this unforgettable day. I highly encourage couples to make their Valentine's Day 2025 appointment now, using my award-winning online booking system to secure their reservation for love on this highly-sought-after day."

Cost for a non-confidential marriage license is \$129. Cost for an ARCC staff member to perform the ceremony is an additional \$107. Ceremonies can be conducted in English or Spanish. To make an appointment, visit www.sdarcc.gov, or call (619) 237-0502.

TOYS From Page 1

the holiday spirit. In addition to toy donations, the event included fun family activities - ornament decoration, holiday tattoos, and a game station (hula hoops and plastic axe toss). Children enjoyed visiting DinoSanta, the Fire Department and our Marine representatives.

Vickey Ciarlanti organized this event, and it was a tremendous success. There was a great volunteer crew who kept the event running smoothly. Thank you to DinoSanta, Fire Station #3, the Marines and all the wonderful volunteers. As the day ended, volunteers worked diligently to pack the collected toys, ensuring they would be delivered to local children in time for the holidays. The success of the Toys for Tots drive in Hidden Meadows is a testament to the compassion and generosity of its residents. The Hidden Meadows community continues to exemplify the true meaning of the holiday season by coming together to support those in need. With the success of this year's Toys for Tots drive, many children will experience the joy of receiving a gift this Christmas.

For more information about the Hidden Meadows Community Foundation go to: hiddenmeadowsfoundation.org.



DinoSanta & Vickey Ciarlanti



Delivering Toys



Tattoo Station



Ornament Craft

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What is happening in HIDDEN MEADOWS

Market Report

JANUARY | 2025

Address	BD/BA/SF	Listing/Selling Price
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Meadow Glen Way W	3/3.5/2,652	\$1,195,000
Circle P Lane	4/2.5/2,518	\$1,499,000
PENDING		
Welcom View	3/3/2,107	\$1,075,000
SOLD		
28657 Rolling Rock	3/2/1,185	\$805,000
10240 Oak Spur Way	4/2.5/2,601	\$950,000
10665 Laurel Path	3/2.5/3,065	\$1,200,000



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HMWSG Lunch at Kalaveras

By Pat Tanabe / Resident

The Hidden Meadows Women's Social Group (Lunch Bunch) had lunch at the new Mexican restaurant Kalaveras (340 W Grand Ave, Escondido). It is in the former La Tapitia location on Grand Avenue. This popular LA chain is planning a further expansion in Southern California to include places in San Diego (La Jolla, Gas Lamp District) and Old Town Temecula. Currently, the Kalaveras chain has 28 restaurants in California.

Kalaveras was founded by brothers Jose and Francisco Brito in 2016. The restaurant chain is named for the calaveras de azúcar, or sugar skulls which are a key part of the Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) celebration in Mexico. The colorful interior design at the restaurants follows the colors associated with Día de los Muertos – black (Land of the Dead), purple (mourning), pink (happiness), white (hope), yellow/orange (sun/marigolds), and red (blood).

It is a fast casual restaurant that serves Mexican and Latin American traditional cuisine with a modern twist. This includes Mexican style sushi and a bar that has over 100 varieties of tequila and mezcal. Kalaveras has Happy Hour, Monday-Friday from 3 – 7 pm. There are also daily specials: Margarita Monday; Taco Tuesday (\$1 tacos all day); Mezcal Wednesday; and Thirsty Thursday.

All of us ordered from the lunch menu, where most entrees were \$12.99 and include a soft drink. Our party sampled the Mi Madre steak salad served in a crispy flour tortilla bowl which included corn & black beans, the pepita salad which included blueberries & pepitas, and the 3-chicken taquito entrée. We all enjoyed our lunch and hope to visit again to try some of their other menu items as well as partake in their Happy Hour and Taco Tuesday.

Kalaveras is a lively, fun restau-

rant. The interior design is vibrant with the Dia de los Muertos colors & sugar skulls, and good, fresh food served in Mexican-style dishware.

If you would like to join us for lunch at local restaurants, please email: HMWSG92026@gmail.com.

Pictured L-R: Susan Crandall, Pat Tanabe, Lisa Saget, Meredith Kifer, Linda Collins

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HVCCA welcomes High Society Jazz Band for first concert of year

The Hidden Valley Community Concert Association will welcome the High Society Jazz Band in concert 2 p.m. Sunday, January 12 at the First Congregational Church.

Back by popular demand, the band will perform New Orleans and Chicago-style jazz, Dixieland, swing, Big Band, plus some Latin and good ol' rock n roll.

Come enjoy the music, humor and energy of HSJB that has been entertaining San Diego for over 30 years. Tickets are on sale at 1:15 p.m. Doors open at 1:30 pm.

First Congregational Church is located at 1800 North Broadway, Escondido. Children 12 and under are admitted FREE. Prices for students through college are \$10.00. Seniors, veterans, and military pay \$20.00. Adults pay \$30. For more information visit: www.hiddenvalleyCCAescondido.info



Choral program seeks new members

The Escondido Chorale Arts Foundation has announced plans for Winter and Spring 2025 as it continues its tradition of presenting high level choral music performances while expanding its collaboration and outreach efforts.

The Center Chorale and Center Children's Chorus performs in the California Center for the Arts, where it will hold its Escondido First Wednesday Community Concert Series this coming New Year, 2025.

In addition to works performed by the Center Chorale and Children's Chorus, this free event will feature guest groups of all ages and styles.

The Foundation's spring concert will be another full chorus extravaganza in the CCAE Center Theater with the music of Twenty-first Century Composers featuring small works by local artists and concluding with Dan Forrest's contemporary "Requiem for the Living."

The Center Chorale will be accepting new singers beginning January 1, 2025, at the Center for the Arts, Escondido in the Conference Center. Looking for a place to sing? The Chorale would love to have you join them for a lovely season of making beautiful music together to share with our community.

The season starts on Monday, January 6, 2025. Contact us Center Chorale Signup an audition time.

The Center Children's Chorus will also be accepting new singers with registrations currently open. They will resume rehearsals in the CCAE Conference Center on Monday, January 6, from 4-5:15 p.m. for ages 8 (and in third grade) to age 15.

Singing in the children's chorus is a great opportunity to experience the art of singing and performing, learn music literacy, practice rhythm instruments, and creating artistic musical experiences with friends. Cost is \$75 January-May.

For signups and information: Center Children's Chorus Registration, contact: Dana Stanford, Administrative Coordinator and Children's Chorus Director, dstanford@escondidochoralarts.com or visit www.EscondidoChoralArts.com.

It's a wonderful community

By GINA LOPEZ

As someone who has to work a little harder to get into the Christmas spirit, I often find myself drawn to the quieter, more reflective moments of the season. The hustle and bustle of holiday preparations is overwhelming, and the glossy perfection of holiday advertisements just doesn't interest me.

Each year, I just want my kids under one roof where we can laugh and play games and watch movies. My favorite is *"It's a Wonderful Life."* After the first few minutes, I tend to be the only one watching it as the black and white classics just don't seem to hold the attention of younger generations.

Usually, the film may seem like just another piece of holiday nostalgia. Actually, only the last act takes place at Christmas so by most definitions, *"Die Hard"* is more of a holiday movie but that is an argument for another time. Beneath its vintage charm and heartwarming conclusion lies a powerful message about community and the profound interconnectedness of our lives.

"It's a Wonderful Life" is not just a Christmas movie; it's a masterclass in community building and the ripple effects of our choices.

George Bailey, the film's protagonist, spends most of the story feeling trapped by his circumstances. His dreams of adventure and personal achievement are perpetually deferred by the needs of his family and his hometown, Bedford Falls. At times, he feels like his sacrifices have been for nothing. Yet, in the pivotal moment when George sees what the world would be like without him, we're reminded of the extraordinary impact of his seemingly ordinary life.

George's actions—saving his brother, standing up to Mr. Potter, and keeping the Bailey Building and Loan afloat—are the backbone of a thriving community. Bedford Falls is not just a place; it's a network of relationships, mutual support, and shared values, and George is its unintentional architect. Without him, the town deteriorates into a shadow of its former self: a cold, unrecognizable Pottersville.

This narrative resonates deeply with anyone who works to build and sustain community. In my own experience, leading organizations and fostering connections can sometimes feel like thankless work. Like George, I've had moments of doubt, wondering if the long hours, hard conversations, and compromises are worth it. But the truth is, every effort we make—no matter how small—ripples outward in ways we can't always see. The relationships we nurture, the programs we create, the spaces we preserve—these are the building blocks of a better world.

One of the most moving lessons of *"It's a Wonderful Life"* is how it celebrates the power of collective action. In the film's climactic scene, the people of Bedford Falls rally to support George in his time of need, repaying his years of kindness and generosity with their own. This moment captures the essence of a healthy, thriving community: people helping one another not out of obligation, but because they recognize their shared humanity.

This idea—that we're all connected and that our actions matter—is at the heart of the holiday season. It's not about the perfect tree, the biggest gift, or even the best-laid plans. It's about recognizing the impact we have on one another and choosing to act with kindness, generosity, and intention.

So, if you're like me and find it hard to summon the holiday cheer, consider taking a page from George Bailey's story. Reflect on the ways your actions have shaped the lives around you. Remember that in building up others, we also build something greater than ourselves: a community that endures, supports, and inspires. And that, to me, is the real magic of the season.

Gina Lopez is CEO at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido Foundation. To learn more about California Center for the Arts, Escondido go to artcenter.org.



Chocolate Festival returns to downtown Feb. 15

Escondido Chocolate Festival “A Tasting Affair” will return to the Downtown on Saturday, February 15, noon – 5 p.m. It is sponsored by the Downtown Business Association (DBA.)

There will be twenty or more exclusive tasting locations for the annual salute to chocolate.

The numbers of attendees at the event is limited to 350—and it usually sells out weeks before the event.

Festival goers pre-purchase a “Passport Ticket” which includes: 1.) Tasting Glass, 2.) Swag Bag to fill with goodies and marketing material provided by participating Grand Avenue Business Owners and Sponsors 3.) Tasting Map to show each participating business “Tasting Location.”

Attendees obtain their passport at “Will Call” located on Maple Street Plaza, then stroll through Downtown Escondido, at their leisure, to each of the 20 or more tasting locations to sample chocolate paired with either wine, beer or champagne.

Attendees must drink any alcoholic beverages prior to leaving each location. This encourages them to meander and get to know each tasting location.

The deadline for businesses to sign up to participate as tasting location is January 15.

There are multiple ways to gain exposure at this event:

- 1.) Be a Tasting Location
- 2.) Provide “swag” informational/promotional flyers, coupons, etc.
- 3.) Donate a raffle item, gift basket, gift certificate, etc. for the “Sweet Raffle”
- 4.) Offer an Event Day Special or Discount
- 5.) Have another idea? Call us to discuss.

Questions? Call event coordinator Christina MacLachlan at (760) 470-9570 .
TICKETS: <https://www.downtownescondido.com/esco-choc-fest>

Grand Tea Room to present “Little Women,” in February

The Grand Tea Room and the 413 Repertory Theater will produce Louisa May Alcott’s “Little Women.” This unique and heartwarming theatrical experience, that combines the charm of high tea with the timeless story will run from February 13 through March 3, 2025,

Guests are invited to step into the world of the March sisters, where they will enjoy an elegant, multi-course high tea while being immersed in a captivating dinner performance.

This specially adapted performance of “Little Women” brings to life the joys, sorrows, and adventures of the four March sisters - Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy - as they navigate the trials of growing up during the Civil War era. Directed by Katie Burlington, this production promises to deliver a fresh and engaging perspective on the familiar story, blending elements of drama, humor, and the bonds of family with the exquisite atmosphere of a traditional English tea service.

The production will feature a full cast of professional San Diego actors, beautiful vintage costumes and an immersive dining experience.

“Little Women”

February 13 - March 2, 2025

Performances at The Grand Tea Room, 145 W Grand Ave., Escondido.

General Admission Tickets (including performance and high tea) \$95.

Deluxe Admission Tickets (including performance, high tea, a show themed souvenir gift bag and loose leaf tea) \$125.

All tickets include a full English high tea meal including, assorted tea sandwiches, savories, scones, petite desserts and tea.

For more information with performance dates and times and to purchase tickets visit 413rep.org

Water board reelects officers; water sales continue decline

By DAVID ROSS

At Monday’s Valley Center Municipal Water District board meeting the four directors who were present (Holtz was absent) reelected Enrico Ferro as president and Daniel Holtz as vice president of the board.

The board also heard the results of the November election where Director Alysha Stehly (Div. 1) and Director Enrico Ferro (Div. 4) won their respective division elections in the November 2024 General Election, and were reappointed to 4-year terms expiring December 2028. Both directors ran unopposed.

Director Oliver Smith opposed the reelection of Ferro as board president. He said he had spoken to other water board members and that on those boards, “the election of board president routinely circulated and not just the person who has the most time on the board.”

Smith added, “The way it has gone for the last however many years has been inconsistent with other districts of our type. I would like to have us consider rotating board selection the same way they do the board of supervisors. I’d like to make that point.”

After Smith’s comment the motion was made to nominate Ferro for another term as board president and the vote was 3-1, with Smith voting no. Holst’s reelection as board vice

president proceeded without further comment.

Annual District financial report for 2023-24

The district’s Manager of Accounting, Vanessa Velasquez, gave the annual financial report for 2023-24, for the fiscal year ending June, 2024. Water purchases declined by 11.7% from 13,020 acre feet to 11,493 AF, with the majority of the decline being in agricultural sales.

This reflects the fact that the district continues its transition from a predominantly farming water supplier to a mixed ag and domestic supplier. Currently, about 55.3% of local water sales are to ag.

This also reflects the fact that domestic and agricultural water rates have seen a steady increase over the last decade of 65% for ag prices and 64.5% for domestic prices. During the same period the monthly pump charge for ¾ inch meter increased from \$33 to \$48.31.

The district, through ag discounts, does provide some relief for growers through programs provided by the San Diego County Water Authority and Metropolitan Water District, which supplies the bulk of water sales to San Diego County. Last year \$1.6 million in ag discounts were passed through to district customers.

Super Crossword

BETWEEN THE EXTREMES

ACROSS	52 Fictional Scarlett	99 Enchilada kin	7 U2’s genre	44 With 94-Down, restlessness	82 Trim (down)
1 Like humans	56 Pitch-perfect	101 Gumbo, e.g.	8 Flamenco dance cry	46 Mail-slot spot	83 Pack away
7 Turn about	57 Science also known as	102 Proton’s place	9 Dance from Buenos Aires	47 Evaluations of resistance to sudden impact	85 Puzzle with pictures
13 Bundt holder	59 Fire on	106 Drillmaster’s syllable	10 Take a stab at	49 Adjusted, as floor tiles	87 Ideas
20 Extreme folly	61 Comic actor Kevin	108 Rent payer	11 Louise’s film sidekick	50 Up in years	89 “ER” extras
21 86-Across in eastern Kansas	63 What melts in a meltdown	109 Hogs’ pens	12 More weird	51 Win — hair	90 Samovar
22 Constructed in advance	65 Lawyer’s assignment	110 Simple exercise to work the abs	13 “— Sharkey” (old sitcom)	53 Oodles	91 “The Swimmer” author John
23 Site of many a yoga class	68 Airport rental	115 Coifs	14 Inverse trig function	54 One-in-a-million	93 Detroit of “Guys and Dolls”
25 Fiji’s part of the world	69 Stir in, say	117 Card that’s an apt alternate title for this puzzle	15 — cool head	55 Suit to —	94 See 44-Down
26 Like some braking systems	70 “Listen up!”	119 “Swing Time” co-star Fred	16 Online missives	58 Mandate	95 “La Isla —” (Madonna hit)
27 Freezing cold	71 Patella site	120 Lifelessness	17 Mexico’s — Villa	59 Climb aboard	97 Pretends to be
29 One adding seasonings	72 Like the social class that includes managers	121 Totally ripped	18 Farewells, to Francois	60 Oscar de la —	98 Patron
30 Gentle — lamb	75 Move beyond	122 Least sloppy	19 Close	62 Vertex	100 Master cook
31 Mumbai, vis-à-vis India	77 Prepared	123 Brook, e.g.	24 Wound result	64 Count — (cereal brand)	103 “—/Sade” (1967 film)
33 “Blow” co-star Johnny	78 Razor brand	124 Passed quickly	28 Producer for Eminem	65 Snarly dogs	104 Not from a major studio
37 Bicolor whale	80 Subs in offices	DOWN	31 Began airing	66 Adopt- (kennel program)	105 “Please, I’d like to help”
39 Reprieve	84 Give a coin to	1 Notes following re	32 Runner-turned-baron	67 Fix, as a dog	107 Before-surgery
40 Clearasil competitor	85 Comic actress Charlotte	2 Major Norse deity	33 Erté’s genre	69 Balm plant	110 Potting soil
41 Selfishness	86 San Rafael, vis-à-vis Marin	3 Film director Martin	34 Designer von Furstenberg	73 French for “nothing”	111 Swiss river to the Rhine
43 Forget to include	88 Invest (with)	4 Literature Nobel	35 Bacon, e.g.	74 Biotech material	112 Made angry
45 Papyrus plants, e.g.	91 Furnace fuel	Morrison	36 Certain evergreen dropping	75 Says “I told you so!”	113 Ticket leftover
48 Bit attached to a cob	92 Different- Prefix	5 Fast Amtrak offering	38 Capital of New Hampshire	76 Eyelid woe	114 Notice
50 Civil War prez	93 Slap cuffs on	6 Enzyme-filled cell organelle	42 Terrier type	79 Writer Umberto	116 In position
	96 Actor/singer Jerry			81 Satisfy	118 Vardalos of the screen

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SUBMIT CONTENT FOR HMN

Deadline for local article submission: 17th of the month for the next issue. Photographs submitted for publication should be hi-resolution, unmodified originals, hi-res/300dpi. We cannot accept photos taken from social media sites such as Facebook.

Send drafts and photos to Patricia Fox to **LocalEditor@HiddenMeadows.news**

HIDDEN MEADOWS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HiddenMeadowsFoundation.org
 HMC2023@gmail.com

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 Donate online: www.HiddenMeadows.news/donate

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

- 911: Immediate Emergency Assistance
- 211: Emergency and non-emergency county information hotline
- Animal Services: 619-299-7012
- CAL FIRE/Fire Information hotline: 619-590-3160
- California Highway Patrol: 858-637-3800
- Deer Springs Fire Protection District**
 Station 1 Headquarters: 760-749-8001
 Station 2 Deer Springs: 760-741-5512
 Station 3 Hidden Meadows: 760-751-0820
 Burn Permits: 760-749-8001
- Road Conditions/ Closures:
 Cal Trans 800-427-7623 or www.traffic.com

Hidden Meadows Community Resources and Organizations

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Contact Marc Weissman at 760-525-5170 or marcweissman11@gmail.com.

Community Sponsor Group

Contact Chairman Jim Chagala, at 760 751-2691 for more information.

Hidden Meadows Neighborhood Watch

Please join our facebook group: Hidden Meadows Neighborhood Watch. We'll share neighborhood information, safety tips, and news of future events.

Contact Info: Erik Tyler 442-235-9060
erikdtyler@gmail.com

Deer Springs Fire Safe Council

Contact Steve Kerrin at 760-807-1141.

Emergency Communication System

To register, visit www.deerspringsfiresafecouncil.com.

An information hotline is updated during emergencies or noteworthy events and may be called 24/7 at 949-472-1407. Red flags are placed on the "Fire Danger Signs" during red flag warnings.

Homeowners Associations

The Meadows Homes Association (MHA)
 760-749-7278

Rimrock Homeowners Association
 760-749-4008

Hidden Meadows Ranch Homeowners Association
 760-407-7575

Silverado Management Services

Oak Meadows Glen Homeowners Association
 760-749-4796

Organizations

Garden Club

Contact Kim Marin (kingroggmarin@gmail.com) or Melisa Mitchell (melisamitchell6@hotmail.com)

Hidden Meadows Bridge Group

We play bridge at the MHA Pavilion every Wednesday from 10:00AM to 2:00PM.

Please call Curt Bruce at 442-222-0821 if you'd like to join us.

Hidden Meadows Community Foundation (HMCF)

Contact Michele Zipse at HMC2023@gmail.com.

www.hiddenmeadowsfoundation.org

Ladies Bible Study

Contact Debbie Hamer at 760-297-1278 or Sue Shepard at 760-213-0325.

Tennis Club

Contact Katy Freeze at 760-749-9722 or clarkfreeze@gmail.com.

Women's Golf Club

Contact Ellen at 760-749-1190

Women's Social Group

email to hmwsg92026@gmail.com.

Super Crossword

Answers

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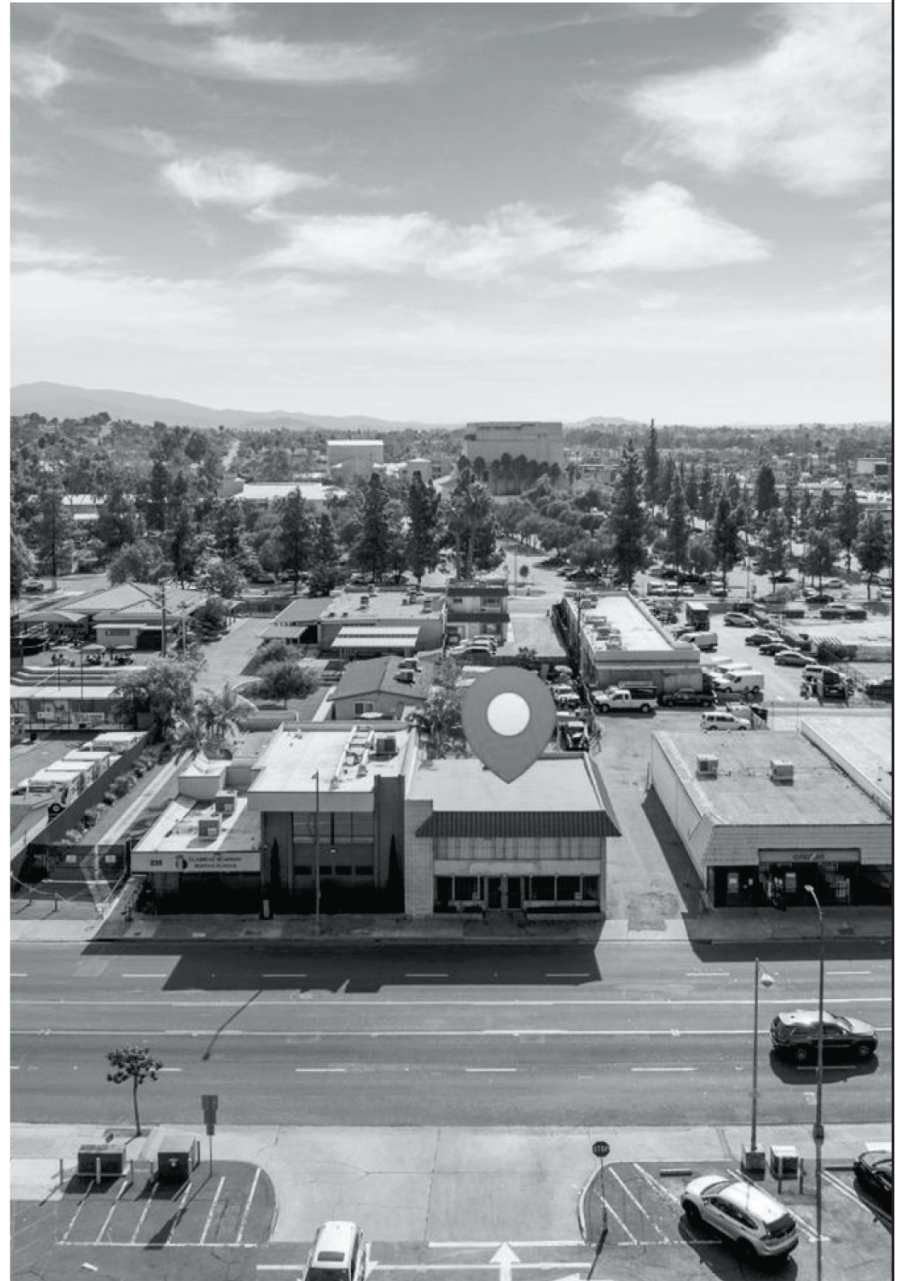
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Property Type: **OFFICE/RETAIL/FLEX**
Total Space: **2,916 SQ. FT.**

Zoning:
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PROPERTY DETAILS:

Incredible Opportunity For Owner Use, Investment, or Development. This Commercial Building in the Center of Escondido is Ideal For Retail, Office, or Flex Space. Upgraded Features Include New Roof, Freshly Painted Interior, And Updated Bathrooms. Versatile Layout W/Potential To Be Divided Into Multiple Units W/Separate Entrances And Bathroom - Ideal For Various Business Needs. Property is Fully Secured With Parking Located At The Rear. Positioned Directly Across From The Escondido Square Shopping Center Provides Excellent Visibility. Easy Access To Both Highway 78 And Interstate 15 Ensures Connectivity For Customers, Clients, And Employees Alike. Property Is Ready For Immediate Use Or Customization To Bring Your Vision To Life. Don't Miss The Chance To Establish Or Grow Your Business In This Highly Desirable Location



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HMWSG Holiday Dinner at Ev Trivoli's

By Pat Tanabe / Resident

As the ladies arrived at the December Hidden Meadows Women's Social Group dinner, they were greeted by the warm ambiance of Ev Trivoli's holiday decorated home, adorned with twinkling lights and seasonal decor. Ev had name tags and jingle bells for us all to wear. Several areas were set-up for the women to dine and socialize. There were two cozy seating areas outdoors, which were lit with vertical strings of lights and warmed with heaters. Ev's husband Dave and son, Ryan, were wonderful bartenders and hosts along with hostess Ev.

As is the tradition of the HMWSG dinners, participants contribute a dish to share and their favorite beverage. December's dinner consisted of heavy appetizers and desserts. Some of the popular appetizers were bacon wrapped dates and pigs in a blanket! The desserts for this event were very special. One dessert was a yule log (buche de noel), which is

a traditional Christmas cake decorated to resemble a log. Another dessert was a Harvey Wallbanger cake which is the name of a cocktail with orange juice and galliano (anise flavor) liqueur and baked by Gwen Dana. One of the most intriguing desserts was keshkul-e-fuqara, which is a rich milk and almond pudding flavored with rosewater. There were also cream puffs and macarons. It was a delectable holiday dessert spread.

The highlight of the evening was a designated photo area, complete with festive props and signs that encouraged everyone to capture the joyful moments. Some members donned holiday hats and fun holiday signs, creating a fun and lighthearted atmosphere.

Dinners are held once a month at one of the member's houses. New residents are always welcome, and the group encourages women to come and be part of this fun and friendly group.

If interested in joining the Hidden Meadows Women's Group email: HMWSG92026@gmail.com.

(top photo) Holiday Dinner at Ev Trivoli's

(lower) Front Row: Danie Walther, Renata McDaniel, Gwen Dana, Michelle Zipse. Back Row: Dannielle Milliken, Svitlana Bailey, Pat Tanabe, Terese Charlson, Pia Courser, Karen Soriano

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