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Weekend Forecast

Friday, November 4
Partly Cloudy
82°/65°



Saturday, November 5
Sunny
81°/64°



Sunday, November 6
Mostly Sunny
77°/65°



Pier to Pier Friendship Walk a Success!



The 8th annual SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk successfully raised \$1.6 million for children with special needs and education – a \$200,000 increase over the Walk’s 2015 donations. Supported by lead presenter Nickelodeon and new media sponsor NBC4 Southern California, the Walk reached a new attendance high with 12,000 people taking part in the event. Photo Credit: Will Hartman – Desert Rose Photograph

Talk about a Near-Miss! LAX Nearly Loses Havana

By Rob McCarthy

A miscalculation by Alaska Airlines nearly cost Los Angeles International Airport the prized Havana route that’s scheduled to begin in early January, nearly six weeks later than the Seattle-based carrier originally promised.

The Department of Transportation in August awarded Alaska a single nonstop flight per day from the West Coast to the Cuban capital city. The first flight will depart 37 days behind schedule on Jan. 5, which prompted federal aviation officials to reconsider whether it made the correct choice giving the route to Alaska Airlines.

Competitor JetBlue asked the federal transportation agency to reassign the West Coast route to Boston, and to name JetBlue as the designated carrier after Alaska postponed the start of the daily service until 2017. Jet Blue argued that the delay gave the Department of Transportation a reason to re-award the Cuban route, which would have grounded the travel plans of West Coast residents.

A diplomatic agreement between the United States and Cuba opened a limited number of commercial flights in and out of Cuba, and the demand among the domestic airlines exceeded the number of flights the Castro government would accept. Cuban officials agreed to 20 flights per day, which the Department of Transportation awarded to eight domestic carriers.

Alaska had to fend off JetBlue’s attempt to divert the route by claiming in a filing with the federal government that Alaska’s request for a delay shows “a lack of preparation and readiness to accept the Department’s award of this scarce resource.”

Alaska countered that JetBlue requested and received a six-month delay to begin servicing Bogota, Colombia, in the past year. Federal officials settled the scrub on Oct. 22, deciding in favor of Alaska Airlines and West Coast travelers who won’t have to change planes in Florida.

“When we selected Alaska’s Los Angeles-Havana proposal, we did so because we

concluded that Alaska’s proposal would provide important public interest benefits,” the federal agency explained. “The department agreed with Alaska’s assertions that U.S. travelers from the western United States should not be denied a nonstop travel option to Havana.”

Beginning Jan. 5, Alaska Airlines will depart from LAX at 8:50 a.m. bound for Havana. The return flight will arrive in Los Angeles at 8:55 p.m., according to the carrier. Connecting flights from Anchorage and Seattle will be scheduled to accommodate passengers from the Northwest.

Tickets are on sale by calling 800-252-7522 or at alaskaair.com.

Alaska isn’t alone in requesting a delay to start servicing Cuba. JetBlue told federal

regulators it needs a one-day delay for one flight from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and a two-day delay for a second route. Southwest Airlines Co. has requested permission to postpone the start of Havana flights from Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, Fla., to next month on Dec. 12.

Fresh off its successful defense of the West Coast route, Alaska announced that tickets are on sale for air travel to Havana in early January. The U.S.-Cuba agreement not only limited commercial aviation, but also the types of Americans who may visit the secluded island nation.

The U.S. government does not currently allow U.S. citizens or travelers flying on U.S. airlines to visit Cuba strictly for tourism.

See Havana, page 4

Veterans Find Hope and Healing Through Creative Arts

(BPT) - Where words fail, the creative arts have the ability to speak. Art therapy is an empowering technique that allows for self-discovery and has the power to produce insight and expression in a non-threatening way. That is why the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) encourages creative arts as a therapeutic, and often lifesaving, tool for returning soldiers.

This year, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) will partner with the VA for the 16th consecutive year to co-present the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF). The weeklong event is attended by 120 talented, gold medal-winning veterans from across the country. Many have participated in creative arts therapy at their local VA hospitals and were recommended to compete in their local veterans creative arts festivals to nurture their talents.

This year’s national festival will be held in Jackson, Mississippi. Previous participants speak highly of the week of performance, healing and awareness. William Gura a

visual artist and first-place winner in previous local festivals states, “It’s the history and the stories of the people that makes the program so impactful. The expressions are about what we’ve seen and experienced. They give us these works of art that only a veteran can create.”

Veterans from war eras spanning Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan gather together to cultivate and eventually exhibit their talents in painting, music, writing, dance and other areas. ALA member Elizabeth Mackey, director of the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival and former VA music therapist, says the festival is a window into the veterans’ experience as active military personnel.

“When you view a performance or gaze at a painting, you don’t just see the artist, you come to understand who these veterans are, where they came from, what they are battling and where they are going. It has been my privilege to learn from them time

See Veterans, page 3

Credit Unions Stand to Gain from Wells Fargo’s Misdeeds

By Rob McCarthy

If South Bay credit unions are busier than usual, they have Wells Fargo Bank to thank. Credit union membership grows every time that a U.S. bank causes a scandal, and the latest uproar involving Wells Fargo is a whopper. It’s more explosive than when Bank of America wanted to charge customers a fee every time they made a debit-card purchase. Or when large banks received billions in federal bailout money during the Great Recession, then paid their top executives bonuses.

Wells Fargo account representatives since 2005 opened 1.5 million unauthorized customer accounts, a revelation that is bringing down a firestorm on the nation’s third-largest bank. Customers are furious about the identity fraud committed against them by their own bank, and they are scrambling to locate any accounts or credit cards opened by Wells Fargo without their knowledge.

Wells Fargo’s illegal sales practices and identify fraud represent the latest in a string of violations of the public’s trust by banks, says Dan Berger, the head of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions.

“To open more than 1.5 million likely unauthorized deposit accounts and more than 500,000 credit card accounts is despicable, and it’s flat-out fraud,” said Berger, who is chief executive officer of the organization representing the member-owned financial institutions.

“Did the banks not learn anything from the financial crisis they caused?” he added.

Credit unions membership has swelled since 2011, according to the industry. The growth cycle began when Bank of America announced plans to charge customers a \$5 fee for every debit-card purchase. The Occupy Wall Street movement also demonstrated outside big banks, accusing them of unfair practices and profiting from the nation’s economic recession.

One in three Americans belongs to a credit union, which are popular with young adults between ages 18 and 29. Even though the banks do a better job with smartphone apps and other technology, millennials as they’re called are, joining credit unions, which has pushed national membership over the 100-million mark for the first time.

Millennials “like a cause and being part of something bigger than themselves,” Berger said. “They like the individuality, like the credit union movement.”

Credit unions benefit when the public believes that big-name banks are ripping them off. Bloomberg News predicts the Wells Fargo scam “could help make 2016 a banner year” for the nonprofit credit unions, which replaced the trusted building and loan made famous in “It’s a Wonderful Life.” One

member’s savings becomes another member’s loan - that’s how it works.

The reality for the affected customers of Wells Fargo is they cannot sue the bank, either individually or in a class-action lawsuit, for the massive fraud it committed. Customers who opened checking and savings accounts with the bank signed agreements that took away their right to sue. They can take their claims of fraud to arbitration. Arbitration is rarely used and consumers almost never win, financial observers say.

“Most of these contracts make it so that we are agreeing to forfeit our rights to file lawsuits against the organization. Not only that, but they often include provisions that outlaw class arbitration,” said a recent Bloomberg News article about the fine print contained in the Wells Fargo customer agreements.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren and members of Congress have tongue-lashed Wells Fargo’s top executive for a lack of accountability for the massive fraud. CEO John Stumpf resigned from his post last week after appearing before congressional committees investigating the consumer fraud. Members of Congress were incredulous that not a single bank executive had been fired or asked to resign. The bank fired 5,300 employees who upper management says were involved.

The unauthorized accounts generated huge fees and profits for San Francisco-based Wells Fargo. The bank, since the fraud was discovered, has pledged to make customers whole by returning any fees they were charged. Some former employees say they opened as many as eight accounts per customer, and they faked personal information to avoid detection.

Not only were individuals targeted, but 10,000 business accounts were defrauded by employees who say they were under tremendous pressure from management to meet their sales goals.

One widely read financial-news outlet questioned why consumers would do business with banks that have been identified as perpetrators of recent frauds. The report pointed to the 2007 financial crisis, the housing bubble, a LIBOR scandal, and even one Asian bank that got caught laundering money for cartels.

“Frankly, it’s amazing anyone opens accounts with these institutions anymore,” Bloomberg News reported. “People probably feel that if they do get screwed or scammed, that they would have some sort of legal recourse. That would only make sense.”

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio plans to introduce a bill in Congress next month to restore customers’ rights to sue Wells Fargo and other banks that include arbitration clauses in their customer agreements. •

Film Review

“The Handmaiden” is a Tangled Web of Lies, Deceit, and Twisted Romance



Kim Tae-ri and Kim Min-hee in “The Handmaiden.” Courtesy of Amazon Studios / Magnolia Pictures

By Morgan Rojas for www.cinemacy.com

“A story is all about the journey,” Uncle Kouzuki says to Count Fujiwara as he cuts off the Count’s fingers one by one, taking joy in the other man’s pain. The sex-obsessed and domineering Uncle, while deplorable in every way, reveals a ring of truth in his observation of what makes a good story, and in the case of director Park Chan-wook’s film “The Handmaiden,” the 2.5-hour journey leads us through a tangled web of sexually-charged tension made even more complicated by the layers of lies and deceit. And while the film remains shocking during its entire duration, it is actually a beautiful piece of cinema at its core. This is a film where trying to predict what will happen next is utterly pointless, so best to just sit back and let Park Chan-wook be your guide throughout this multidimensional journey.

The scene is set during the 1930s as a young Korean woman, Sookee (Kim Tae-ri), is chosen to work as a handmaiden to the young Japanese heiress Lady Hideko (Min-hee Kim), whose family have all passed away, leaving her the sole proprietor of her family’s fortune. Sookee meets the heiress at the beautiful, yet secluded, Korean estate where she lives with her much older Uncle Kouzuki (Jin-woong Jo)— who has made his plans of marrying her to inherit her wealth very clear. Both women are quickly drawn to each other as the lines of friendship become blurred and sexual tension arises, however, it is Sookee who hides an ulterior motive that may prove to be detrimental.

Before being hired as the handmaiden, Sookee made her living as a forgery specialist and master pickpocket. Seeing an opportunity to leave that life behind for good, Count Fujiwara (Jung-woo Ha) devised a plan to get Sookee close to the Lady, with the intention to convince the heiress to marry him instead of her Uncle. Soon after she married the Count, he planned to put Lady Hideko in a mental hospital and keep all of her money to himself. He would give Sookee a cut of the wealth, as well as give her all of the Lady’s clothes and beautiful garments. Sookee knows that following through with the plan is her ticket out of her dead-end life, however, she never anticipated growing so personally attached to and falling in love with Lady Hideko, which leaves her questioning everything she thought she knew and wanted.

“The Handmaiden” is divided into three distinct parts, and what I have just described takes place in just the first act. Needless to say, there is much more drama to unfold in the second and third part. The second act delves deeper into the Lady’s childhood growing up alone and her relationship with her twisted uncle, a man who collects pornographic

novels and forces his young niece to read them aloud to grown men. While the first act leaves the viewer with one sense of how the film is going to progress, the second act turns that theory upside down. We revisit scenes that occurred in the first act through a new lens in the second and third acts, proving that what you think you know... you really don’t.

Park Chan-wook’s phenomenal storytelling abilities are on heightened display here. Using the three-part structure to tell the same story through three very distinct characters gives the film a tangible sense of fullness. Scenes that seemed to be abruptly cut off at the height of tension are revisited and followed through in later acts. Park Chan-wook doesn’t hold back from getting graphic, but he does so in a way that doesn’t feel overly pornographic for shock’s sake. The energy he creates from the environment, the characters, and the situations make for one truly unforgettable viewing experience.

All of the performances are effective and wildly entertaining, but it is the debut from actress Kim Tae-ri who plays Sookee that is truly mesmerizing. Tae-ri beat out over 1,500 other actresses to secure the part and it is to her advantage that she had little to no acting experience prior. Her demeanor can best be likened to ‘Belle’ in “Beauty and the Beast.” Both have an innocence that is only intensified by their large, doe-eyes when cautiously roaming through the large estate that is filled with books. While at first naive, they are self-sufficient and prove to have a backbone when they feel like they’re in jeopardy. This may be just a coincidence, but even Sookee’s outfit— a blue long-sleeved dress with a white apron— also seems reminiscent of the Disney princess.

If you were not familiar with Park Chan-wook’s impressive filmography (credits include “Oldboy” and “Thirst”), before “The Handmaiden,” then you are in for a mind-blowing experience. Often regarded as a Renaissance man of Korean cinema, Park Chan-wook does what all excellent filmmakers strive to do— create a technically engrossing and emotionally compelling story that resonates with its audience long after the credits have stopped rolling. “The Handmaiden” should serve as an example of masterfully executed cinema from both sides of the camera. Despite “The Handmaiden’s” rather lengthy runtime with both Japanese and Korean subtitles, this is the rare occurrence where I am actually looking forward to re-watching the film again, knowing that when I do, I’ll walk away with an even deeper appreciation of Park Chan-wook’s unique style.

‘The Handmaiden’ is not rated and runs 144 minutes. Now playing at ArcLight Cinemas, The Landmark, and other select theaters. •

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Seniors

Ways to Save on Your Healthcare in 2017

(BPT) - If you're like most people, there are a few times a year when you sit down to review your expenses - your cable bill, entertainment expenses and grocery receipts, for example - and try to figure out where you and your family can save money.

One item you should consider is your healthcare costs in 2017. Since the fall season marks the beginning of the annual open enrollment period for employees, now is the perfect time to sign up for a new health benefit plan or make changes to your current plan.

Offered as part of those benefits, Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) are two simple ways for people to save money in the New Year. An FSA, which is provided by your employer, allows you to save funds for eligible healthcare expenses. An HSA - which you can obtain on your own or through your employer - is a tax-advantaged savings account that allows you to set aside money to cover medical expenses throughout your lifetime.

A major advantage of both accounts is that individuals may use the full amount of their pre-tax dollars toward the care you and your family may need; employees who enroll in an FSA can contribute a portion of their salary pre-tax to pay for qualified medical or dependent care expenses, while an HSA helps individuals with qualifying high-deductible health plans pay for current and future medical expenses.

The number of HSA accounts has risen to 18.2 million in 2016, a 25 percent increase since 2015, according to Devenir Research. In addition, according to the 2016 Flexible Spending Account and Health Savings Account Consumer Research study commissioned by Visa and conducted by C+R Research, 90 percent of FSA users agree that saving money, since contributions are pre-tax, tops their list of reasons for having an FSA. In fact, 40 percent of FSA users claim they would cut back on their medical expenses if they didn't have an FSA.

The study also finds that an FSA with no carryover option represents an important barrier to adoption amongst employees, who fear losing their unused dollars at the end of the plan year. 60 percent of non-FSA users noted they would sign up for this benefit if their employer offered the option to carryover up to \$500 of their unused health FSA bal-



ances remaining at the end of the plan year.

One of the most convenient ways to access funds in an HSA or FSA is with a Visa Healthcare Card, which allows employees to use funds in their HSA or FSA to pay for qualified medical expenses wherever Visa debit cards are accepted, making it easy to pay for expenses such as:

- Copays and deductibles
- Prescriptions
- Dentist visits: Cleanings, orthodontia, dentures
- Exams: Physicals, dermatologist
- Vision care, including exams, new glasses, LASIK
- Hearing exams and aids
- Medical equipment such as blood pressure monitors, thermometers
- Smoking cessation programs

For added convenience, most pharmacies, grocery stores and other retailers that sell healthcare products have the capability to distinguish between covered items and non-covered items when you pay for them, so you don't have to wonder whether something is covered or not.

By using a Visa Healthcare Card at these locations, you no longer have to pay out-of-pocket and then submit receipts to be reimbursed for your medical expenses, saving you time and money!

There's a reason why 78 percent of FSA users surveyed report having an FSA card and why 52 percent of HSA owners surveyed say they use a debit card linked to their HSA to pay for their medical expenses, as the 2016 Flexible Spending Account and Health Savings Account Consumer Research study commissioned by Visa and conducted by C+R Research found. As you review your options this open enrollment season, ask your employer if they offer an HSA or FSA with a Visa Healthcare Card to provide easy access to your funds. To learn more, visit www.visahealthcare.com.

Veterans

from front page



and time again."

Creative Arts therapy encourages expression and memory recall. It can be used in physical rehabilitation to regain damaged motor skills, or as a cognitive therapy to encourage emotional sharing. Often conducted in a group setting, creative arts therapy is used as a way to show patients that they are not alone and reinforce the benefits of their treatment plan.

The ALA began to sponsor the NVCAF in 2000, but the relationship has grown and ALA now co-presents the festival. ALA members devote more than 25 million dollars' worth of volunteer hours to the festival annually. Their roles vary from assisting veterans with art projects and erecting displays, funding

travel and support, to supporting publicity, productions and materials development. In recognition of its dedication to healing veterans through art, the American Legion Auxiliary was honored by the Americans for the Arts in 2014.

Peggy Thomas has volunteered more than 800 hours to the festival. She says art therapy is the process of healing and a glimpse inside the struggle of the artist veteran who has been silent. "The festival shines a light on innovative work in order to give back to people who have given so much to us."


For information on participating in the event or volunteering, visit: <http://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/caf/index.asp>

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EMPLOYMENT
Freelance Writer wanted for local community newspaper. Area to be covered is Torrance and nearby cities. Topics include local events, people and other items of interest, possibly a city council or school board meeting. You must have some writing experience. Please send a sample of your writing and resume

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Why the Do-Not-Call List Needs a Superhero

By Rob McCarthy

What happened to the National Do Not Call list that was supposed to stop unwanted telemarketing calls?

The national registry of households that don't want to be bothered with unsolicited sales pitches worked for several years after the block took effect in 2003. The telemarketers backed off for awhile, however, more than a decade later the robocalls are back. Companies behind them are using phone technology that makes a caller look legitimate, and so more of us are picking up.

What people in Washington, D.C., would really like is for the phone service providers to function as Robocops.

"Robocalls have become epidemic but the phone companies have been slow to provide their frustrated customers with relief," said Tim Marvin, who heads up the End Robocalls campaign for Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy division of Consumer Reports.

Blocking phone numbers or the location of the caller is called spoofing, and it's no laughing matter to the keepers of the Do Not Call Registry. They say that technology that blocked unwanted callers after the registry was created has been re-engineered for bad purposes.

The head of the Federal Communications Commission has enlisted the nation's telephone providers to build more consumer-protections into phone services. The Robocall Strike Force met once over the summer, and is brainstorming to create counter technology and other fixes to spoofing. There are obstacles, however, because of changes in how phone service is provided.

Consumers are opting for phone service via Internet, called VOIP, because of higher-quality sound and robocall blocking services. Scammers have discovered technology to defeat the blocks when they send a call into the phone network. Authorities say the cloaking technology hides the callers' real identity and their location, appearing to be a relative or a government office.

One California congresswoman is determined to slap the telemarketing blitz with a federal ban that takes its name from a futuristic movie franchise. The Repeated Objectionable Bothering of Consumers on Phones (ROBOCOP) Act would require telecom companies to offer consumers free optional robocall-blocking technology, according to its sponsor.

"ROBOCOP will put an end to the scourge of robocalls so families can enjoy dinner in peace, people can watch their favorite show without constant interruption, and you won't ever be left wondering if you actually won a Caribbean cruise," said Rep. Jackie Speier, D-San Francisco.

She introduced ROBOCOP four months



This movie character inspired a robocall-stop bill in Washington.

before the FCC Robocop Task Force sat down for the first time. A spokeswoman for the FCC reported after the meeting that "stopping unwanted calls is a simple idea but complex to accomplish," thus tempering expectations for a permanent fix anytime soon. The task force and FCC have narrowed down what realistically should be done.

Calls that impersonate a U.S. government office should be stopped, said spokeswoman Alison Kutler in a report last month on the FCC web site. A low-tech solution offered is that phone providers block the frequently spoofed phone numbers coming into their networks.

Their databases would include numbers that robocallers use to impersonate government, healthcare agencies and banks. Political campaigns and charities are exempt from the Do Not Call list, so even the proposed fixes wouldn't stop them from calling and asking for donations.

The phone providers, especially the voice-over-Internet users, could authenticate caller ID if they chose to, Kutler said. It's the phone providers who are partly to blame for robocallers getting through their networks to customers, she suggested. If the Internet-phone services all included "robust" robocall blocking and filtering, all subscribers in the network could block unwanted callers and send them to voicemail. The FCC says it's working with providers to do just that.

The agency also collects data on which phone numbers generate the most complaints from consumers. More than 3 million complaints about robocalls were filed last year, according to the consumer federation. The data has helped robocall blocking companies improve their systems, according to the FCC.

Its power to stop incoming calls from outside the country is very limited, according to the FCC's spokeswoman. So is the government's ability to deter overseas operators who defy the Do Not Call law. Less than 10 percent of the fines were paid, says the Consumer Federation of America which is supporting the ROBOCOP Act in Congress.

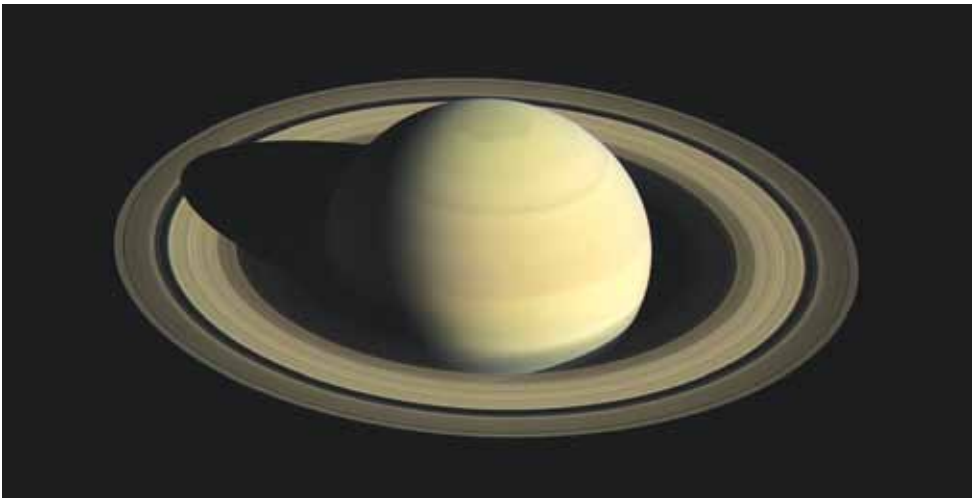
The ROBOCOP Act, among other things, would direct federal regulators to require telecom companies to offer free robocall-blocking technology to consumers, according to Speier's office.

While the bill works its way through Congress, phone customers are being urged to voice their displeasure through lower-level channels. The phone providers need the pressure turned up on them, says a leading advocate for strengthening the call registry that worked well until 2011.

"If you want to be mad at someone," says Tim Marvin, the campaign manager for the Consumers Union's End Robocalls campaign, "call your phone company." •

Looking Up

Going Out in a Blaze of Glory: Cassini's Grand Finale



This view shows Saturn's northern hemisphere in 2016, as that part of the planet nears its northern hemisphere summer solstice in May 2017. Photo courtesy of Jet Propulsion Laboratory California Institute of Technology

By Bob Eklund

With the conclusion of the international Cassini mission orbiting Saturn and its moons set for Sept. 15, 2017, the spacecraft is poised to soon begin a thrilling two-part endgame.

Cassini will enter the first part of this denouement on Nov. 30, 2016, when the spacecraft begins a series of 20 passes just beyond the outer edge of the main rings. These weekly loops around Saturn are called the F ring orbits, and they send the spacecraft high above and below the planet's poles. During these orbits, Cassini will approach to within 4,850 miles of the center of the narrow F ring, with its wispy and ever-changing structure.

"During the F ring orbits we expect incredible views of the rings, along with the small moons and other structures embedded in them, as we've never seen them before," said Linda Spilker, Cassini project scientist at JPL. "The last time we got this close to the rings was during arrival at Saturn in 2004, and we saw only their backlit side. Now we have dozens of opportunities to examine their structure at extremely high resolution on both sides."

Cassini's final phase—called the Grand Finale—begins in earnest in April 2017. A close flyby of Saturn's giant moon Titan will reshape the spacecraft's orbit so that, instead of passing outside the rings, it passes through the gap between the rings and the planet. The spacecraft is expected to make 22 plunges

through this gap—an unexplored space only about 1,500 miles wide—beginning with its first dive on April 27.

During the Grand Finale, Cassini will make the closest-ever observations of Saturn, mapping the planet's magnetic and gravity fields with exquisite precision and returning ultra-close views of the atmosphere. Scientists also hope to gain new insights into Saturn's interior structure, the precise length of a Saturn day, and the total mass of the rings—which may finally help settle the question of their age. The spacecraft will also directly analyze dust-sized particles in the main rings and sample the outer reaches of Saturn's atmosphere—both first-time measurements for the mission.

The mission will come to a dramatic end on Sept. 15, 2017, after more than 13 years studying Saturn, its rings and its moons—and nearly 20 years since launch. On that day, Cassini will dive into Saturn itself, returning data about the chemical composition of the planet's upper atmosphere until its signal is lost, after which the spacecraft is expected to burn up like a meteor.

"While it will be sad to say goodbye, Cassini's final act is like getting a whole new mission in its own right," said Spilker. "The scientific value of the F ring and Grand Finale orbits is so compelling that you could imagine an entire mission to Saturn designed around what we're about to do." •



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Havana

from front page

Travelers must fall into one of 12 approved categories, including family visits, educational activities and public performances or exhibitions.

Alaska has enlisted the assistance of Cuba Travel Services, which has served the Cuba destination for nearly two decade. The airline encourages would-be visitors to contact Cuba Travel Services for assistance securing travel visas, hotel lodging, and ground transportation and creating itineraries. A blog at <https://blog.alaskaair.com/destinations/how-to-cuba-travel/> explains what Americans need to know about making the trip.

Los Angeles, which could have lost the new direct-to-Cuba route, was one of 12 domestic carriers to apply for the newly opening commercial routes. The federal government chose eight airlines, citing the limited number of round-trip flights the Castro government agreed to allow.

Domestic carriers making daily departures for the capital city are:

Alaska Airlines: from Los Angeles to Havana
American Airlines: Miami and Charlotte
Delta: New York and Atlanta

Frontier: Miami
JetBlue: New York, Fort Lauderdale, Orlando
Southwest: Fort Lauderdale and Tampa
Spirit: Fort Lauderdale
United: Newark and Houston.

Major U.S. cities left off the department's list included Chicago, Boston, Denver and Philadelphia. Federal officials defended their selections saying they concentrated on serving cities with the largest number of U.S.-Cuban residents.

Chartered air service to any point in Cuba is currently unlimited, and is not affected by the agreement.

Though U.S. airlines also have permission to service cities other than the capital city of Havana, none is based on the West Coast. American, Frontier, JetBlue, Silver Airways, Southwest, and Sun Country offer service from from Miami, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis. Cuba is allowing 10 daily flights to its airports in Holguin, Santa Clara, Matanzas, Camaguey, Cienfuegos, Santiago de Cuba and Manzanillo. •



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Baked Cranberry Apples



Recipe by Frontier Co-op, provided by BrandPoint.

Prep time: 10 minutes | Cook time: 20 minutes | Makes 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1/2 teaspoon Frontier Co-op Organic Ground Nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon Frontier Co-op Organic Vanilla Extract
- 1/2 teaspoon Frontier Co-op Organic Orange Peel Granules
- 4 Frontier Co-op Organic 2 3/4" Korintje Cinnamon Sticks
- 1 pound Golden Delicious or Granny Smith apples
- 2 cups rinsed and sorted fresh cranberries
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 3/4 cup orange juice
- 2 teaspoons melted butter

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut 1/2-inch top off the stem end of the apples. Remove the stems, leaving a small hole into which you can insert a cinnamon stick. Core the apples with a melon baller. Discard cores. Scoop out the inside of the apples, being careful not to pierce the skin. Chop the flesh. Set aside.
2. Combine the cranberries, raisins, chopped apple flesh, orange juice, butter, nutmeg, vanilla, and orange peel in a medium bowl. Stuff this mixture inside the hollowed-out apples and place in lightly greased oven-proof dish.
3. Replace cap on each apple, with a cinnamon stick through the stem opening. Spread any extra stuffing around the apples and bake in preheated oven until tender, about 45 minutes.

Pumpkin



Violet

Pumpkin is a very sweet boy who was rescued with his littermates from a high kill shelter at just 3 weeks old. Because he was hand feed until he learned to eat on his own, Pumpkin loves affection and attention from his human friends. He runs to greet you when you walk in the door and purrs the moment you touch him. Pumpkin will let you carry him around like a baby and will curl up to sleep with you. Because he is so young, he likes to play a lot, pouncing on just about everything, including his brother and sister. Pumpkin gets along with everyone including a very big, calm, sweet doggie in his foster home.

Bertie was the smallest one of her litter and was pretty shy to begin with. Now she's a very curious, playful and sweet little kitten. Because she's still a baby, it's important that Bertie goes to a home with another cat or kitten, so she's not lonely and can grow up to be a well mannered kitty. Both of her brothers have been adopted, so she really wants a playmate. Bertie is easygoing and loves everyone she's met so far, cats, dogs, people, you name it. Bertie is so excited to find her forever human and kitty

Charlie and **Chloe** are a bonded brother/sister pair who are looking for a home together. These two love playing with other cats and dogs, but are most often with each other. They were bottle fed by Kitten Rescue volunteers, so are they especially affectionate with people. Chloe is the big cuddle bug of the two. Charlie is an avid explorer - and yes, his eyes are different colors!

Kiwi is quiet and sweet until you feed her and she turns into a Gremlin! She has the softest little mew, but once she is eating she starts to growl at anyone nearby. She is just saying “my food, stay away.” Kiwi is a nut...a beautiful loving little nut who could be yours! She would love to be adopted with either her step brother Meeko or step sisters Elle or Orly or into home with another kitty. Kiwi is good with other cats, friendly dogs and children over 8 years old.

Bandit is absolutely adorable and extremely photogenic. She loves to play with all sorts of toys including feathers, which she will drag around. Bandit has the cutest meow which she will display when you pet her. She will lay top of your feet in bed just to me near you. Bandit needs to be in a home with other kitties so she can have a playmate.



Bertie



Kiwi



Charlie and Chloe

These kitties are available for adoption through Kitten Rescue, one of the largest cat



Only



Margot



Bandit



Ragnar

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Pinkie

We are looking for volunteers to help with our pet adoption fairs which are held every Saturday at the Petco located at 537 N. Pacific Coast Highway Redondo Beach 90277, from noon to 3: 30 p.m. If you are interested in volunteering and can commit to at least one Saturday a month, please contact us at info@msfr.org. You can also visit all of our Miniature Schnauzers & Friends rescues at the adoption fair or check out our website, www.msfr.org. If you have any questions about a particular dog's availability you can email us at info@msfr.org. Schnauzers! Bet you can't adopt just one!

Are you looking for an elegant, reserved, mature lady to be your adoring and quiet companion? If so, look no further. I'm **Pinkie** an 8-year-old, female purebred Miniature Schnauzer. Sadly, my elderly owner could no longer care for me so one of her relatives took me to an L.A. County shelter and left me. I'm a shy, reserved lady with a docked tail, natural ears and gorgeous eyes. I've had a Vet exam and a dental, which left me with eight less teeth but I feel absolutely wonderful. I'm a bit on the larger side, weighing about 17 pounds, but I'm still able to fit on your lap and I have many years left to give to a family who can appreciate and love me. If you are interested in Pinky, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

Hello, my name is **Buffy** but I'm nothing like the Vampire Slayer. In fact I'm the one who needed to be rescued from an L.A. County shelter where I was taken after being picked up as a stray. I'm a cute, 1-year-old,



Tootie

is exactly what I am. I'm also a 4-year-old, female purebred Miniature Schnauzer that was rescued from an Inland Empire shelter. I don't know how it happened, one minute I was just walking along and then next I'm at the shelter where they called me a stray. Can you believe that I was such a horrible mess that they couldn't determine my breed and I was actually listed as a poodle? Of course the MSFR folks being so smart, knew exactly what I was and rescued me. After receiving a well-deserved makeover, a stunning schnauzer with a lovely face and very expressive eyes emerged! I'm about 20 pounds, which makes

me a bit “full figured” but I am very sweet, well mannered and I get along with everyone. If you are interested in Tootie, please email info@msfr.org for more information.

If you want to meet a really handsome guy with the most gorgeous eyes, you must visit me, **Pooka**. I am an 8-month-old, male Husky mix who was rescued from an L.A. County shelter after being surrendered by my owner. I'm still a puppy so I'm not sure why they no longer wanted me but I'll bet you will fall in love with me. I'll admit that I need to put on a few pounds since I only weigh about 35 pounds but that shouldn't be a problem. The usual adult weight for my breed is closer to 60 pounds but remember that I'm still a puppy and I'll continue to grow and fill in for several more months. I'd love to find a family with a doggie pal because I know I would do best with someone to show me the ropes and help me be the greatest guy ever. I'm very submissive, a real people pleaser and if you give me a chance, I know you'll never find a sweeter guy to be a member of your family! I can be seen by appointment at Yellow Brick Road Doggie Playcare in El Segundo Call 310-606-5507 or email southbaydoggie@hotmail.com for an appointment or more information. •

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Buffy



Pooka

Happy Tails



Huey is loving his new life and family in Long Beach!

Congratulations to **Huey** and his new family. Huey is our 4-year-old SEAACA rescue that was our diamond in the rough. After being groomed, he was absolutely stunning and when his new family came to meet him, he just turned on the charm! The whole family

is crazy about him and he now has his very own human sister and brother, ages 9 and 10 respectively. He's now living in Long Beach and loving life with his family. We wish much happiness to all. •

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If you see a dog with a **YELLOW RIBBON** or something yellow on the leash, **this is a dog who needs some space.** Please do not approach this dog with your dog. Please maintain distance or give this dog and his/her person time to move out of your way.

Four cartoon dogs are shown from the side, each with a yellow ribbon tied to its leash. From left to right: 1. A small white dog with brown spots on its head and ears, wearing a black harness. 2. A medium-sized tan dog with a black collar. 3. A black dog with white spots, wearing a black collar. 4. A brown dog with a black collar, holding a white leash in its mouth. The yellow ribbons are tied to the leashes of the first three dogs.

There are many reasons why a dog may need space:

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Illustrated by Lili Qin www.doggiedrawings.net

Sports

No Kobe, No Problem

By Adam Serrao

For the first time in 20 years the Los Angeles Lakers took the court without Kobe Bryant on their Opening Day roster. It was a peculiar sight to behold. Jack Nicholson was there, looking on from his normal seat. Denzel Washington was wearing his normal sweat suit and hat, ready to take in the game. The Staples Center was packed to the rafters with Lakers fans, ready to root their team on to victory. Yet, still, no Kobe. Despite the five-time NBA champion not being in the house and an obvious lack of superstar power emanating from center court, Opening Day 2016 was still a success for the Lakers. The young pups on the team were finally able to spread their wings and play the game that they wanted to play. The result? A 120-114 victory over the Houston Rockets.

Last year, it took the Los Angeles Lakers five games to finally get their first win of the season when they beat the Brooklyn Nets by six points on Nov. 6. This year, the Lakers got their first win of the season in their very first game, almost assuring their fan-base that they will surpass last year's franchise worst final record of 17 wins and 65 losses.

"A big part of what we are trying to do here is develop this identity, this culture," Lakers first-year head coach Luke Walton explained. "We keep using [that] word and learning how to win games is part of figuring out who we are and it's a skill at this level." Walton, the NBA's youngest head coach at the age of 36, experienced success last season while filling in for Steve Kerr as interim head coach with the Golden State Warriors. Walton posted a 36-4 record through 40 total games, but the young coach knows that he has an entirely different beast ahead of him with a Lakers team that hasn't had success in years.

While this year's Lakers certainly don't figure to be a championship team by any means, the young core does figure to be able to electrify the Staples Center crowd. On opening night alone, Jordan Clarkson recorded 25 points off of the bench while D'Angelo Russell contributed 20. The performances by those two and the rest of the team gave fans a glimpse into what they can expect the future of this team to be. "It's not like we're rebuilding from the first step," Walton explained. "[The Lakers have] put in some

pain already." Three consecutive NBA Draft Lottery picks are evidence of that pain as an extremely young L.A. squad looks to mature quickly in order to begin competing for a playoff spot once again. This year may just be the year that the maturation takes place.

While one win doesn't speak too loudly in the grand scheme of an 82 game season, it is certainly an encouraging sign. A team full of young players can stick together, play together, and fight together against an opponent featuring one of the NBA's best players in James Harden.

"Tonight is a baby step," Walton continued. "It's just one game. But it's a step in the right direction of what we are trying to do." Julius Randle, another one of the Lakers young studs, echoed Walton's feelings. "It's just one game," he said. "It's not the dang Super Bowl." It may just be one game, but after only winning 17 of them last year, starting the regular season out with a victory becomes a rather enormous accomplishment.

When Kobe Bryant is in the game, he obviously dominates the ball and decides what he's going to do with it. Now, without Kobe, it is evident that these new-look

Lakers play selflessly and have no problem distributing the ball around the court. While it may just be one game and not the Super Bowl, like Randle explained, one win has the ability to give fans and players hope. Hope that a team as young as the Lakers can, indeed, blossom into a contender in the West. Hope that even without Bryant, Los Angeles is capable of gathering wins. This season is clearly one of rebuilding for Los Angeles. But one win can maybe make the rebuilding era something that is fun and entertaining to watch, in stark contrast to the wreck that was last season.

The post-Kobe Bryant era has officially begun and the Lakers started it off the right way with a win. The team has officially turned the page on the next chapter in the history of the franchise and it should be entitled, "Rebuilding". Though that word often comes along with negative feelings, this year's Lakers team may have what it takes to compete on a nightly basis, which is much more than we could have said for the team last year. Inspired basketball is back in Los Angeles and now, with these Lakers, the game may actually be fun to watch again. •



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Stop Drafts, Save Money and Improve Your Home

(BPT) - Can you imagine keeping your windows open all winter long? The heat loss, cold drafts and all that money spent on wasted energy would be staggering. But if your home has folding pull-down attic stairs, a whole-house fan, a fireplace or clothes dryer, you may be doing the equivalent of leaving the windows open every day.

Drafts from these often overlooked spaces waste energy and cost you big in the form of higher energy bills. They are also the largest source of heating and cooling loss in the home.

Most homeowners are well aware of the benefits that caulk and weather-stripping provide to minimize energy loss and drafts. But what can you do about drafts from the four largest energy leaks in your home - the folding attic stairs, the whole house fan, the fireplace and the clothes dryer? Here are some tips and techniques that can easily, quickly and inexpensively seal and insulate these areas.

Attic Stairs

When attic stairs are installed, a large hole (approximately 10 square feet) is created in your ceiling. The ceiling and insulation that were there have to be removed, leaving only a thin, unsealed, sheet of plywood.

Because your attic space is ventilated directly to the outdoors, the attic space can be very cold in the winter, and in the summer it can be very hot. And what is separating your conditioned house from your unconditioned attic? Only a thin sheet of plywood.

Try this yourself: at night, turn on the attic light and shut the attic stairway door. If

you see any light coming through, it means your heated and air-conditioned air is leaking out of these large gaps in your home, 24-hours a day.

An easy, low-cost solution to this problem is to add an insulated attic stair cover that seals the stairs and stops drafts and energy loss.



Add the desired amount of insulation over the cover to restore the insulation removed from the ceiling.

Whole-House Fans and Air-Conditioning Vents

When whole-house fans are installed, a large hole (up to 16 square feet or larger) is created in your ceiling. The ceiling and insulation that were there have to be removed, leaving only the drafty ceiling shutter between

you and the outdoors.

An easy solution to this problem is to add a whole house fan shutter seal. Made from white textured flexible insulation, you simply install the seal over the ceiling shutter, secure it with Velcro, and trim it to fit.

The shutter seal can also be used to seal and

insulate air conditioning vents, and is easily removed when desired.

Fireplaces

It's ironic that while fireplaces are intended to heat up a house, they can create some seriously cold drafts.

Fireplaces, especially during the winter heating season, are energy losers. One study showed that an open damper on an unused fireplace in a well-insulated

house can raise overall heating-energy consumption by 30 percent. Another recent study showed that for many consumers, their heating bills may be more than \$500 higher each winter because of the drafts and wasted energy caused by fireplaces.

Even if the damper is shut, it's not airtight, and glass doors don't stop the drafts either. Your chimney is an opening that leads directly outdoors - just like an open

window and like a giant straw sucking your expensive heated or air-conditioned air right out of your house!

A simple way to avoid this problem is to add a Fireplace Plug to your fireplace. Available from Battic Door, a company known for their energy conservation products, the Fireplace Plug is an inflatable pillow that seals the fireplace damper, eliminating drafts, odors, and noise. The pillow is removed whenever the fireplace is used, then reinserted after.

Clothes Dryer Exhaust Ducts

In many homes, the room with the clothes dryer is the coldest room in the house. In the winter, cold drafts come in through the duct, through your dryer and into your house. Many dryer vents use a sheet-metal flapper to try to reduce these drafts. This is very primitive technology that does not provide a positive seal to stop the drafts.

Compounding the problem is that over time, lint clogs the flapper valve, causing it to stay open.

A surprisingly simple solution to this problem is to add a dryer vent seal. This will reduce unwanted drafts, and also keeps out pests, bees and rodents. The vent will remain closed unless the dryer is in use. When the dryer is in use, a floating shuttle rises to allow warm air, lint and moisture to escape.

For more information on Battic Door's energy conservation solutions and products for your home, visit www.batticdoor.com or, to request a free catalog, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to P.O. Box 15, Mansfield, MA 02048. •



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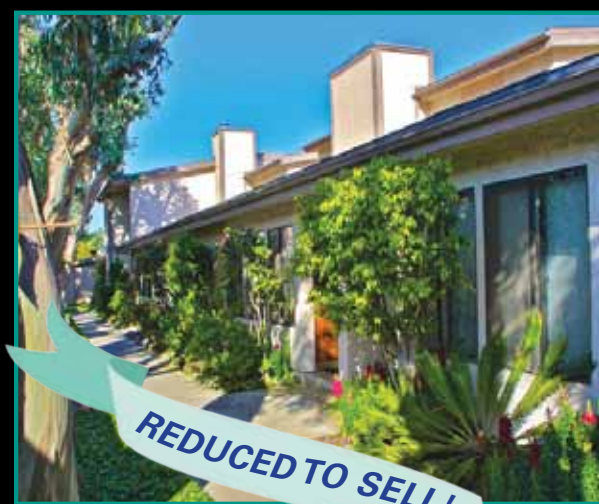
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- 3 BEDS/2 BATHS
- 2 CAR GARAGE
- 1,922 SF.
- REMODELED KITCHEN
- PRIVATE BACKYARD
- Lot: 6,156 SF.



815 Penn St. El Segundo
Offered at \$879,000

- 2 BEDS/ 2 BATHS
- ALL UPGRADED
- PRIVATE PATIO
- CLOSE TO SCHOOLS



414 W. Walnut Ave. El Segundo
Offered at \$1,499,000

- 4 BEDS/4 BATHS
- 5 CAR GARAGE
- PLUS WORKSHOP
- UPDATED KITCHEN
- SECOND STORY DECK
- 2,943 SF. /Lot: 6,699 SF.

FUSION 5412 W. 149th Pl. #6 Hawthorne
Offered at \$775,000

- 3 BEDS/3 BATHS
- 1,660 SF.
- SIDE UNIT/SUPER BRIGHT
- POOL

TOWNHOMES



1309 East Grand Ave. # E, El Segundo
NEWLY REMODELED \$799,000

- 3 BEDS/ 2.5 BATHS
- 1,356 SF.
- 2 CAR GARAGE
- POOL & SPA

1630 E. Palm Ave. #5, El Segundo
\$719,000

- 3 BEDS/ 3 BATHS
- 1,378 SF.
- BEAUTIFUL DECOR
- PRIME END UNIT

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