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Weekend Forecast

Friday, January 5
Partly Cloudy
67°/58°



Saturday, January 6
Partly Cloudy
67°/54°



Sunday, January 7
Partly Cloudy
67°/54°



Santa and His Sleigh Visit Chamber



Santa, his sleigh and all eight reindeer stopped by the Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce to say hello and pick up some “elves.” Santa and the elves proceeded through the neighborhood talking to families and kids. Santa’s elves were Mark Lipps, MB Chamber, Brandon Oates, MB Chamber, DeAnn Chase, Chase Law Group, Jackie Balestra, MB 360 Radio Show, Peter Yollin, Leadership Manhattan Beach and Sylvia Gayed, Manhattan Tax & Accounting.

Marijuana Trade, Outdoor Plants Banned

By Rob McCarthy

A century of marijuana criminal law went up in smoke this week, replaced by a patchwork of do’s and don’ts for Manhattan Beach residents and businesses to follow.

California voters in November 2016 approved Prop. 64 to legalize and tax the cultivation and sale of the flowering hemp plant. On Jan. 1, marijuana became legal for recreational adult use by people 21 years and older.

It had been a crime since 1913 to possess marijuana in California. That changed on Monday as adults can grow six marijuana plants at their homes as long as the plants are out of plain sight. The strong odor from mature marijuana plants attracts attention, and authorities want to deter minors from getting their hands on easy weed.

However, growing pot outdoors is outlawed in Manhattan Beach under a temporary ordinance passed Nov. 21 by the City Council. The ordinance also put the city off-limits to the marijuana trade until mid-October, when the council will revisit the issue of permitting the newly legalized marijuana trade to set up shop locally.

This is “an urgency ordinance for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety,” the 10-month ban reads. It applies to for-profit and nonprofit commercial cannabis activities, including delivery services.

Let’s start here. Adults over 21 can grow their own marijuana or buy it from a state-licensed retailer. All licenses must be issued by the Bureau of Cannabis Control. Adults can give away marijuana, but cannot sell or barter with it. The adult-use law also doesn’t mean the end of medical marijuana. State-sponsored medicinal pot retailers will be open for business in early 2018.

Young adults, 18 to 21, can buy medicinal marijuana with a recommendation from a physician or a county-issued identification card.

The cannabis control bureau had issued 400 temporary licenses statewide as of Jan 1. Unlike Colorado that was ready with retail

stores on the law’s first day, California’s rollout is much slower. The state released the rules for retailers and laboratories in November, including a requirement that applicant for licenses comply with local rules.

Now for the Don’ts
Make no mistake. There is a time and a place for lawful use of recreational pot. And, there are places where, under no circumstances, will it be OK to smoke a joint.

Employers have the right to ban the use of marijuana and cannabis products by their employees. Getting stoned before or during the workday is not a protected activity.

Driving while under the influence remains illegal, the DMV reminded motorists in a pre-Christmas announcement. A stash of marijuana must be kept in a closed container in a vehicle or in the trunk. The open-container restriction applies to passengers, too.

“The DMV will assign negligent operator point counts for this violation,” it warned on Dec. 21.

The annually revised drivers handbook for 2018 will explain the penalties for marijuana-related violations.

Traveling across the state line with marijuana is forbidden, even to Nevada and Oregon that have legalized pot. It’s not OK to carry marijuana or cannabis onto federal property, including national parks and military

bases. That’s because federal law continues to classify weed as a Schedule 1 drug, making it illegal to use as a medicine or to kick back and relax.

A Schedule 1 drug is considered extremely harmful and without any medical benefits. Other Schedule 1 drugs include LSD, heroin and the date-rape drug Ecstasy. Despite several studies done on marijuana’s medical benefits, federal authorities haven’t re-classified marijuana. Nonetheless, 23 states now allow medical marijuana. Landlords and private-property owners can ban marijuana from the premises, too.

Despite the new freedoms, California’s commercialization of weed isn’t open season for state-licensed shops in the South Bay. Carson is the only city open to allowing marijuana businesses to operate locally. Voters approved taxing marijuana and cannabis products grown and sold in the city. There are no retail shops open yet.

The Bureau of Cannabis Control did not issue a single temporary license to operate a cannabis store, growing operation, testing lab or delivery service in the South Bay, as of last week. The nearest adult-use retailers of marijuana are found in West Hollywood where four retailers had the green light to open for business on Jan. 1.

See Marijuana, page 3

“Naturalization Information Session” at Manhattan Beach Library

Are your or a loved one interested in becoming a citizen? Then come to the Manhattan Beach Library on Monday, January 8th, 2018 at 6:00 PM for a Naturalization Information Session, a presentation and Q&A led by representatives from the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services.

In this program, attendees will learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the requirements to become a citizen, the naturalization process, the citizenship test, and the naturalization

ceremony. A plethora of valuable and informative handouts and booklets will also be provided to attendees as supplies last.

This event is free and registration is not required.

Manhattan Beach Library is part of the County of Los Angeles Public Library, and is located at 1320 Highland Ave., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. For more information, please call 310545-8595 or visit the library’s website at colapublib.org. •

Ambulance Services Get Through Loophole in New Health Care Law

By Rob McCarthy

A loophole in a consumer protection law aimed at ending surprise medical bills is allowing ambulance companies to bill Medicare recipients thousands of dollars for their services. The new law that took effect in July ended the practice of surprise medical bills for out-of-network fees as long as a patient used a doctor, clinic or lab in their insurance network. However, people covered through Medicare, Medi-Cal or a self-insured health plan were excluded from the health care protection in Assembly Bill 72.

Only people with private insurance are shielded from the practice known as balance billing. A doctor or provider typically will send a bill first to an insurer, which pays a flat rate for the service. The doctor, lab or clinic can seek the balance of the charge directly from the patient. Ambulance companies are included, too.

The Kaiser Family Foundation recently looked into the continued balance billing practice of ambulance companies and says it's not illegal. Unless an ambulance service belongs to a network, it can set its own rates.

"Most complaints reviewed by Kaiser Health News did not appear to involve fraudulent charges. Instead, patients got caught in a system in which ambulance services can legally charge thousands of dollars for a single trip—even when the trip starts at an in-network hospital," the news division of Kaiser said.

Ambulance charges that Kaiser reviewed ranged from \$3,600 to \$8,400. Patients and their families who call 911 are vulnerable because it's an emergency and they don't get to choose which ambulance company responds. The Kaiser team said its review of complaints about ambulance company bills found two common scenarios.

In the first scenario, a patient is taken by ambulance to the hospital after a 911 call. The second and less common occurrence happens when an ambulance service transfers a patient between hospitals.

"In both scenarios, patients later learn the fee is much higher because the ambulance was out-of-network, and after their insurer pays what it deems fair, they get a surprise bill for the balance," Kaiser's team said.

City fire departments also provide emer-

gency ambulance service, including El Segundo that bills \$1,850 to respond to a 911 call and transport to the hospital. El Segundo residents have complained in letters to the Herald about the paramedic-ambulance charge being too high, especially to older residents who live on fixed incomes.

The transport fee issue in El Segundo was raised by several residents who wrote letters ahead of the 2016 City Council election. The City has three emergency ambulances in service, including two new vehicles that cost \$406,000. They replaced two older emergency vehicles because of rising maintenance and repair costs.

The gap in "balance billing" protection for consumers is sizable, the Kaiser Foundation found. Sixty-one percent of privately insured employees are covered by self-funded employer-sponsored plans, it reported. Unless the Legislature expands the consumer protection for all health plans, ambulance company complaints will continue.

Kaiser's team reported that ambulance companies can charge by the mile and add on costs for oxygen and other services during the ride to the hospital. If paramedics staff the ambulance rather than emergency medical technicians, then that will hike up the bill charge. Kaiser added, "Even if the patient didn't need paramedic-level services..."

The 26 ambulance companies found online that serve the South Bay don't discuss fees on their websites, making it difficult to view local pricing even for the most basic emergency call.

The California Department of Managed Health Care welcomed the patient protection measure in July. The department said AB 72 took the consumer out of the middle of billing disputes between a health care facility and insurance plans for out-of-network charges. Consumer groups had complained the billing practice was unfair.

Ambulances and diagnostic labs are both covered under the consumer protection law, yet they're so different, said the Kaiser foundation that studied 350 billing complaints from 32 states. The patient and families have little control over who provides the emergency service, unless it's in a city like El Segundo.

"Patients usually choose to go to the doctor, but they are vulnerable when they call 911,

or get into an ambulance," Kaiser's team found. "The dispatcher picks the ambulance crew, which, in turn, often picks the hospital."

Patients who show up at an out-of-network hospital might be facing expensive medical bills, even if they are later transferred to their health plan's hospital of choice. Some of the

the compensation rate is too low. The California Department of Managed Health Care anticipated some balance billing disputes last July, when it welcomed the health consumer protection law. It offered this advice if a surprise bill from an out-of-network healthcare professional is sent: Dispute it first with your



The six-month-old law didn't stop surprise medical bills for ambulance services.

patients who asked the Kaiser foundation to intervene in their billing disputes wanted the charges lowered. Others thought they should be charged nothing.

An expectation of free medical emergency transportation isn't realistic either, an industry expert told Kaiser. The private ambulance companies are entitled to expect reimbursement that covers their costs of keeping crews ready to respond "even if no calls comes in," said Jay Fitch, who runs an emergency services consulting firm.

Fitch said that private ambulance companies receive no payment unless a person isn't transported, and that one-third of all calls are freebies. An adult who is mentally capable can refuse to be taken by ambulance.

Many ambulance companies reportedly refuse to join health insurer networks because

health plan and include a copy of the bill.

"Your health plan will review the grievance and should tell the provider to stop billing you," the health care department said. If the health plan takes more than 30 days to respond or a consumer isn't satisfied with the response, then file a complaint with the department.

The department accepts complaints by phone at 888-466-2219 or online at its web site, www.HealthHelp.ca.gov.

The California Association of Health Underwriters supported passage of AB 72, saying that billing disputes that its members handled would start to decline by midyear. The trade association of 2,000 health insurance agents and brokers says they respond to tens of thousands of phone calls per year about out-of-network billings. •

Seniors

Don't Get Hacked! Time to get Serious about Password Safety

(BPT) - We all know hiding your house key under the doormat is a terrible idea, but we do it anyway because it's a convenient backup. When it comes to safeguarding passwords, especially in a family setting, people often choose convenience over safety.

As families manage their digital information and online accounts, many end up opting for that less secure key-under-the-doormat solution. People are already sharing passwords, and their methods of sharing are not always the best. Some 41 percent of adults with online accounts admit to sharing passwords with friends and family, according to an Americans and Cybersecurity survey by Pew Research Center. Yet, 90.8 percent of respondents say they know that having strong passwords helps them better protect their families.

If you were to dig into the reasons behind these repeated, overly simple, shared passwords, it's actually pretty understandable as to how this happens," according to LastPass Senior Director of Product, Steve Schult. "The average person has some 200-plus logins. If you were to give each its own strong, unique password, that's way too many for one person to keep track of and remember, let alone all the other family members that might also use some of those accounts."

If you're debating whether to make the



switch to a digital password manager, here's a few ways it can improve your family's online security and help stop the struggle with passwords.

Create rock-solid passwords: Most password managers offer a secure password generator that allows you to set and create a long, strong and unique password for every online account. You can create a password up to 100 characters long, including numbers

and symbols. Another way to do it is by using the "passphrase" approach, meaning string together words that create a phrase. Be sure to steer clear of birthdays, anniversaries, street names and other specific personal details that can be found through a simple social media search.

Secure more than just passwords: There's an endless number of passwords and sensitive information you can store in your password

manager, including banking logins, passport and license numbers, shopping accounts, email and social media passwords and more. By storing all of this information in your secure vault, you'll always have access to the information whenever and wherever you may need it.

Safely share passwords with family members: One benefit of a password manager that's designed for family use is that it lets you safely and conveniently store passwords and valuable documents in folders for flexible sharing with others in the family. LastPass Families includes unlimited shared folders, which means you can create multiple folders and store an endless number of passwords and share with those in your family.

Use it as a teaching moment: Have a talk with your kids about how passwords are the keys to our digital lives, and how good password habits help protect everything from personal details to finances.

Plan for the digital afterlife: When there's a death or serious emergency, it turns out that state and federal laws, along with service agreements, can block your family from getting access to your online accounts. With a password manager that allows emergency access, family members can get into your password vault and have access to whatever they need. •

Sports

Trojans End 2017 with Bowl Loss

By Adam Serrao

With a 24-7 loss in the Cotton Bowl last Friday night, the USC Trojans fell in their final game of the season and were defeated by the Ohio State Buckeyes for the first time since 1975. The Trojans may not have lost the game as much as Ohio State's defense won it, but quarterback Sam Darnold certainly had his share of mistakes that wound up costing the team. While the Trojans took to the field as this year's Pac-12 champions, the Buckeyes took the field looking to prove a point. After being snubbed from the College Football Playoff, their 17-point victory at AT&T Stadium in Texas proved that they at least belonged in the conversation. That same playoff snubbing is also perhaps what gave Ohio State the extra motivation it needed to send the Trojans back to Los Angeles with USC's third loss of the season.

Throwing for 365 yards wouldn't normally seem like such a bad way to end a college football season. When those 365 yards are accompanied by three turnovers and eight sacks in a 24-7 loss, though, that ending quickly begins to lose its fairytale luster. "Whenever you turn the ball over that much, it's hard to win games," Darnold said at his postgame press conference. "Just a lot of stuff where we shot ourselves in the foot."

That's exactly what the Trojans did last

Friday night--shot themselves in the foot. USC had four turnovers that led to 21 Ohio State points, the first of which occurred on the third play from scrimmage as cornerback Kendall Sheffield stripped receiver Deontay Burnett, giving the Buckeyes a one-touchdown lead less than three minutes into the game. As if that weren't enough, Darnold and the Trojans would give up plenty more before the half. A second quarter pick-six by safety Damon Webb that was returned 23 yards put USC in an even deeper hole before Darnold lost a fumble just before the half that led to another two-play, 59-yard touchdown drive for Ohio State. The Buckeyes would take a 24-7 lead into the half.

It was a leaky offensive line that undoubtedly led to USC's season-ending loss and Darnold's struggles in the game. A monstrous total of eight sacks seemed to understate the amount of times that the Buckeyes' defensive front was immediately in the backfield, rushing Darnold's hand into making a decision. The Trojans were held scoreless in the second half of play. The only time the team did score on the night was after Ohio State muffed a punt, setting Ronald Jones II and the USC offense up in excellent field position for the team's only score of the game in the second quarter of play.

All in all, Darnold's typical inconsistency

was on display at the professional football stadium last week. It's obvious that the quarterback has the ability to make the most jaw-dropping passes in all of college football. Even some quarterbacks in the NFL seem incapable of making the throws that Darnold completes to his wide receivers at times. Just when the 6-foot-4 sophomore seems to get rolling, though, the inconsistency that has bothered him all season long rears its ugly head again. He misses wide open wide receivers and fails to take care of the football--both of which oftentimes lead the Trojans to having to come from behind or in some cases even lose the game.

Darnold's three turnovers in the game raise his personal total on the year to 22. That number alone is reportedly higher than 101 other FBS teams, according to Sports Illustrated. Playing behind an offensive line that is clearly in shambles certainly doesn't help his cause. Neither does taking that same offensive line to go up against the extremely elite pass rush of Ohio State. "Our defensive line won that game," Buckeyes head coach Urban Meyer explained. "That quarterback, we've got a lot of respect for him--but the best way to disrupt a quarterback is to get

after him and we did. If you don't let him set his feet, you have a chance. You saw there at the end of the game that quarterback never set his feet."

All of the chatter now surrounding the Trojans, and more specifically Darnold, will turn to questioning whether or not he'll be back at USC for his junior season or take the journey into the NFL. Darnold will be forced to make up his mind by the deadline to declare on January 15, if he hasn't made up his mind already by the time this article is published. Cases can be made for him either staying or going, but in his own words, Darnold has stated, "I'm really just focused on just hanging out with my teammates for the next couple of days. But it's tough. I'll look at everything and make my decision after that."

On one hand, another year in college certainly won't hurt the maturation process of a quarterback who clearly still needs just a little bit more of it. On the other, an NFL coaching staff would certainly help Darnold in maximizing his potential. Oh, and the millions of dollars he'd receive by signing an NFL contract... There's always that too.

Aserrao6@yahoo.com •

Marijuana

from front page

The California Department of Public Health talks about legal, safe and responsible use of cannabis on the web at www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/DO/letstalkcannabis/

Pages/LetsTalkCannabis.aspx. The health information pertains to youth, pregnant and breastfeeding women, parents and mentors, and health care providers. •



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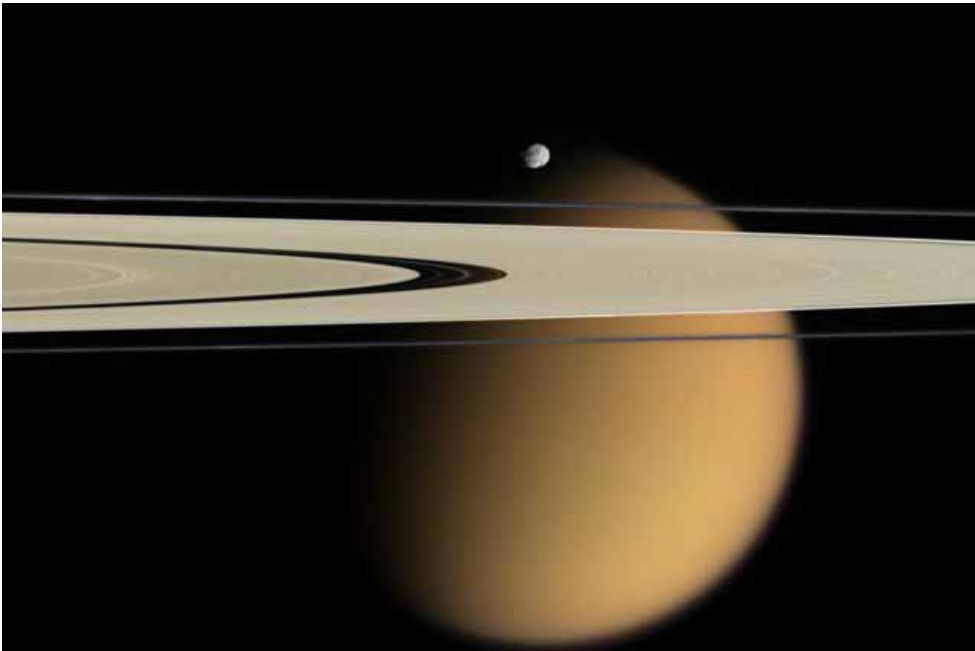
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Looking Up

Intense Methane Rainstorms Hit Saturn's Largest Moon, Titan



Titan, Saturn's largest moon, behind the planet's rings. The much smaller moon Epimetheus is visible in the foreground. Photo Courtesy of NASA/JPL/Space Science Institute.

Based on a Press Release from UCLA, Provided by Bob Eklund

Titan, the largest of Saturn's more than 60 moons, has surprisingly intense rainstorms, according to research by a team of UCLA planetary scientists and geologists. Although the storms are relatively rare—they occur less than once per Titan year, which is 29 and a half Earth years—they occur much more frequently than the scientists expected.

"I would have thought these would be once-a-millennium events, if even that," said Jonathan Mitchell, UCLA associate professor of planetary science and a senior author of the research, which was published in the journal Nature Geoscience. "So this is quite a surprise."

The storms create massive floods in terrain that are otherwise very cold deserts. Titan's surface is strikingly similar to Earth's, with flowing rivers that spill into great lakes and seas, and the moon has storm clouds that bring seasonal, monsoon-like downpours, Mitchell said. But Titan's precipitation is liquid methane, not water.

"The most intense methane storms in our climate model dump at least a foot of rain a day, which comes close to what we saw in Houston from Hurricane Harvey this summer," said Mitchell, the principal investigator of UCLA's Titan climate modeling research group.

Sean Faulk, a UCLA graduate student and the study's lead author, said the study also found that the extreme methane rainstorms may imprint that moon's icy surface in much the same way that extreme rainstorms shape Earth's rocky surface.

On Earth, intense storms can trigger large flows of sediment that spread into lowlands and form cone-shaped features called alluvial fans. In the new study, the UCLA scientists found that regional patterns of extreme rainfall

on Titan are correlated with recent detections of alluvial fans, suggesting that they were formed by intense rainstorms.

The finding demonstrates the role of extreme precipitation in shaping Titan's surface, said Seulgi Moon, UCLA assistant professor of geomorphology and a co-senior author of the paper. Moon said the principle likely applies to Mars, which has large alluvial fans of its own, and to other planetary bodies. Greater understanding of the relationship between precipitation and the planetary surfaces could lead to new insights about the impact of climate change on Earth and other planets.

Titan's alluvial fans were detected by a radar instrument on the Cassini spacecraft, which began orbiting Saturn in late 2004. The Cassini mission ended in September 2017, when NASA programmed it to plunge into the planet's atmosphere as a way to safely destroy the spacecraft.

Juan Lora, a UCLA postdoctoral scholar and a co-author of the paper, said Cassini has revolutionized scientists' understanding of Titan.

Although Titan's alluvial fans are a new discovery, scientists have had eyes on its surface for years. Shortly after Cassini reached Saturn, radar and other instruments showed that vast sand dunes dominated Titan's lower latitudes, while lakes and seas dominated its higher latitudes. The UCLA scientists found that the alluvial fans are mostly located between 50 and 80 degrees latitude—close to the centers of Titan's northern and southern hemispheres, but generally slightly closer to the poles than to the equator.

Such variations in surface features suggest Titan has corresponding regional variations in precipitation, because rainfall and subsequent runoff play a key role in eroding land and filling lakes, while the absence of rainfall promotes the formation of dunes. •

Finance

How to Lower Your Monthly Mortgage Payment



(BPT) - Owning your own home comes with many advantages, including escaping rising rents and the personal and financial stability associated with homeownership. Fortunately, millions of Americans, with less than 20 percent down, have been able to buy a home sooner thanks to mortgage insurance (MI). If you don't put down 20 percent of the mortgage cost, you will likely be required to purchase MI, which enables low-down-payment borrowers to qualify for home financing from lenders.

While homeownership has many benefits and continues to be part of the American Dream, it is not without costs. Several surveys have found that the majority of first-time homebuyers - over 80 percent according to one study - put less than 20 percent down. For these borrowers, there is usually the added expense of MI, which may give some of these borrowers pause.

But there is good news: the monthly private mortgage insurance premiums do not last forever on most conventional loans. And when private MI (PMI) cancels, homeowners will have more cash in their pockets each month - money that is available for home improvements or other goals. It is important to understand, however, that not all MI is the same, and not all MI can be canceled.

There are numerous low-down-payment mortgage options available that include MI. The two most common are: (1) home loans backed 100 percent by the government through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) that include both an upfront and annual mortgage insurance premium (MIP); and (2) conventional loans, which are typically backed at least in part by private sources of capital,

such as private MI. The key difference is that one form can be canceled (PMI) while the other (FHA) typically cannot be canceled.

An FHA loan can be obtained with a down payment as low as 3.5 percent. However, be aware that you will typically have to pay a mortgage insurance premium (MIP) of 1.75 percent of the total loan amount at closing or have it financed into the mortgage. In addition to your regular monthly mortgage payments on your FHA loan, you will also pay a fixed monthly MIP fee for the life of the loan. This means you could pay hundreds of dollars extra every month - thousands over the life of the loan - until you pay off the entirety of the loan.

If you obtain a conventional loan with PMI, you can put as little as 3 percent down. Like an FHA loan, PMI fees are generally factored into your monthly mortgage payment. However, PMI can often be canceled once you have established 20 percent equity in the home and/or the principal balance of the mortgage is scheduled to reach 78 percent of the home's original value. This means that the rest of your mortgage payments will not include any extra fees, so that your payments go down in time, saving you money each month. What you save in the long run can then be put toward expenses like home renovations, which can further increase your home's value.

MI is a good thing because it bridges the divide between a low down payment and mortgage approval. But not all MI is created equal. If you want to buy a home but still save in the long run, PMI might be the right option for you. Check out lowdownpaymentfacts.org to learn more. •

Classifieds

The deadline for Classified Ad submission and payment is Noon on Tuesday to appear in Thursday's paper. Advertisements must be submitted in writing by mail, fax or email. You may pay by cash, check, or credit card (Visa or M/C over the phone).

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Politically Speaking



One Man’s Opinion

Trump a Benefit to Real Reporting

By Cristian Vasquez

Thanks in part to the 24-hour news cycle and propaganda networks such as Fox News and MSNBC disguised as news outlets, President Trump was able to make it to the White House. While the 2016 Presidential campaign highlighted the evident dismissal of serious news reporting by most Americans, the Trump presidency is having the opposite effect. Whether it be the desire to take down the sitting President or the will To defend him, investigative reporting is receiving more attention by the mainstream media outlets (Fox News included even if to debunk these reports). Newspapers are again being looked to for reliable information because of the quality of their reporting.

From the Russian investigations to Roy Moore’s pedophile-tendencies tainted past, it has been investigative reporters from different newspapers that have given a new life and meaning to the mundane news cycle. Of course these serious reports will be used by one network as “the nail in the coffin” against the Trump Administration and his army of evil destroying America. Meanwhile, the other network will dismiss them as nothing more than a witch hunt funded by Soros and remind us that Hillary somehow still matters. Regardless of the freak show on television, people are finally paying attention to newspapers and the investigative pieces that come from said sources.

The reason this trend is refreshing isn’t based on the slight upswing in newspaper subscriptions, but rather that we are finally

getting solid reporting. It is this type of reporting we, as a nation, will need when Special Counsel Robert Mueller finishes his probe into the Russian interference case. We can’t say with certainty how the propaganda machines MSNBC and Fox News will present the findings of Mueller’s investigation, but we have a pretty good idea. However, for full details and accuracy we’re going to have to rely on print journalism. Yes, the Internet can provide us up-to-the-minute information, but the rabbit hole of absurdity, lies and distortion that has become the Web is a nightmare.

Don’t forget it was newspapers that broke the Pentagon Papers and Watergate--not television, not radio. While we can criticize reporters, columnists or entire newspapers for displaying bias, their record for accuracy when printing investigative pieces is strong. Furthermore, they are more effective than what we see on cable news.

We don’t know what Mueller will find. Maybe there was no collusion between Trump’s campaign and the Russians, but the Russians interfered in our election on their own. That possibility is more than enough of a reason for an investigation. We don’t know what journalists will find when they dig--and as of late, there have been some interesting discoveries. Maybe investigative reporting is up because journalism became complacent during the Obama years. Maybe journalists are fueled by the desire to destroy or topple President Trump. Or maybe we as media consumers are simply paying attention to more reliable sources. •

Another Man’s Opinion

Triumphant Trump Continues to Confound Critics, Skeptics. CNN

By Duane Plank

When billionaire business mogul Donald Trump announced his candidacy for the presidency on June 16, 2015, the wheeler-dealer/turned reality television star knew his candidacy was considered a dark-horse stab at best by political pundits... and as a pathetic joke, by many of those paid very handsomely to espouse their view points on the body politic.

Trump joined a field of Republican presidential wannabees that was bursting at the seams, featuring nearly 20 candidates. While Trump had the name recognition garnered from his success in the boardroom, and his star turn on the popular The Apprentice, he had no political gravitas.

He was considered an entitled tycoon who would burn wads of his own Benjamins attempting to nab the nomination and then flame out/drop out to return to constructing behemoth edifices, appear on TV and hobnob with Miss America contestants.

The Republican field in the spring and summer of 2016 included Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Ben Carson, John Kasich, Chris Christie and Rick Perry--all experienced politicians who knew how to play the game inside and outside the Washington, D.C. beltway. There were so many pols crowding the field that the initial debates had to be held in two sessions, with the men (and woman, remember Carly Fiorina?) who were polling the highest receiving a spot in the main debate, while the candidates who were invisible in the polls (think Jim Gilmore) were banished to the kids’ table and forced to take part in the “JV debates.”

Trump’s candidacy wasn’t given the pro-

verbial “snowball chance in hell” initially by the entrenched media-ites. There may have been a few on the Fox News Channel who championed Trump, but who would fathom that the Republican Party establishment would allow such a political neophyte to somehow wrangle the nomination from one-time frontrunner and political royalty Jeb Bush?

Surely the GOP would not commit electoral college suicide and send an overmatched Trump out to confront Queen Hillary and her well-honed cadre of hatchet-men and women in the general election, which would surely devolve into an apocalyptic meltdown for the party and result in catastrophic “down-the-ticket” losses--meaning the country would be looking at another eight years of backpedaling under Clinton.

And that is when it started. The Republican establishment underestimated Trump. The media paid him little positive heed. The Dems underestimated Trump so much so that they didn’t even prop Hillary up and campaign in key states she lost when she was electorally steamrolled as Americans watched the results confound the so-called experts as the polls closed on that fateful Tuesday evening in November 2016.

When the final votes were tallied, Trump had an electoral landslide--and certain washed-up, big-mouth Libs (think Madonna), who had threatened to leave the country should Trump triumph, back-pedaled, saying they were “just kidding.”

Two weeks after Trump’s big tax win, the moral of the story is: Love Trump, hate Trump, but don’t underestimate the man. He has bamboozled a lot of people more than once. Why should 2018 be any different? •



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Anytime Egg Nachos



Ingredients

- 2 Eggland’s Best eggs (*large*)
- 1 large (*or 2 small*) sweet potatoes, washed and sliced into thin chips
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1 teaspoon pepper, divided
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/4 cup finely shredded red cabbage
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 cup guacamole
- 1/4 cup pico de gallo or favorite salsa
- Sour cream, jalapenos or other additions for serving if desired

Preparation

• Preheat oven to 400 F. Place sweet potatoes on a large sheet pan in a single layer, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with half the salt and pepper. Don’t overcrowd the pan. (*You may need to use 2 sheet pans.*) Bake for 15-20 minutes. Flip sweet potatoes and bake for another 10 minutes or until potatoes are crispy chips.

- Coat a nonstick skillet with cooking spray and bring to medium heat. Scramble the eggs with milk and remaining salt and pepper, and pour into skillet, stirring often until cooked through. Set aside.
- Remove sweet potatoes from oven and top with half of the cheese, followed by the eggs and beans. Top with

remaining cheese. Place back in the oven until cheese is melted about 5-10 minutes.

- Remove from oven and place on serving dish. Top with cabbage, cilantro, guacamole and salsa. Serve immediately.

Entertainment

Film Review

A Beguiling Romance with a Twist

By Ryan Rojas for www.cinemacy.com

Love can be quite intoxicating. So can Paul Thomas Anderson movies. Anderson's natural cinephile sensibilities have allowed him to make some of the very best films of all time. Seemingly drawing straight from the well of pure cinema, his films are dazzling masterpieces that seep deeply into the audiences' subconscious and only get better the more they are thought about over time.

Set in the high-fashion world of post-war London, Phantom Thread is the story of an

had other muses before. One is seen before the arrival of Alma, but it's Alma whom we find is his match and whose presence in his life of consuming routine and ritual slowly frays at the seams. Woodcock tries to live his life of narcissistic vanity in his undisturbed artistry, but Alma disrupts this vision before the movie reveals its screwball story that forces Reginald and Alma to realize how much they need each other.

His most reduced story yet, Phantom Thread is carried by the beguiling performances of the two lovers. The performance that Day-Lewis exerts as Woodcock in control and restraint is as exacted as any craftsman. If we are to believe his statement that this is indeed his final screen performance, then it is a fantastic one to leave behind. Vicky Krieps as Alma is a presence that can suck the air right out of a room, her face communicating exactly what she's thinking.

The allure of a PTA film is that there is always more than meets the eye. Interestingly, this is a detail that is manifested in the film. Woodcock sews names and words into the linings of his pieces, blesses them or just creates a sneaky secret that no one will ever know. These codes can leave any critic endlessly intrigued.

Phantom Thread turns out to be a phantom of a film itself, leaving a mysterious and lasting impression that will continue to occupy the mind long after its watch. Creeping darkness and growing tension make this love story one that will sit quite well next to its peers.

Phantom Thread is 130 minutes. Rated R for language. Now playing at the Landmark and ArcLight Hollywood. •



Phantom Thread courtesy of Focus Features.

obsessive dressmaker (Daniel Day-Lewis) and the woman he meets who tames him--until a rocky disruption ensues that forces each to see how essential they are to the other. An absolutely gorgeous work and a rich feast for the eyes, this period piece is one that deserves to be seen on the big screen.

One thing that separates Phantom Thread from Anderson's other films is that it's Anderson himself who's behind the camera for this movie. Here he assumes director of photography duties as well as directing. When you're able to operate the camera, pick the lenses and make your own lighting decisions, you are exacting full control to execute your vision, as he does here.

Reginald Woodcock (Day-Lewis) knows a thing or two about the necessity of control when it comes to creating his works of art. And with that comes his need for perfection, irritable if otherwise. Mercilessly meticulous in realizing his vision, it's his sister Cyril (Lesley Manville) who takes to tempering his frustrations while she helps him run the business. Woodcock may in fact be the character that most closely mirrors Anderson himself--the commentary on his own artistic sensibilities (and shortcomings) as a perfectionist auteur. He shows that creating such beautiful pieces often comes from a joyless place.

This makes the introduction of Alma (Vicky Krieps) one that inspires Woodcock. He has



Ryan Rojas

Check It Out

Turtles All the Way Down: John Green Captivates in Latest Novel

Reviewed by Jeff Huttinger, Library Assistant, El Segundo Public Library

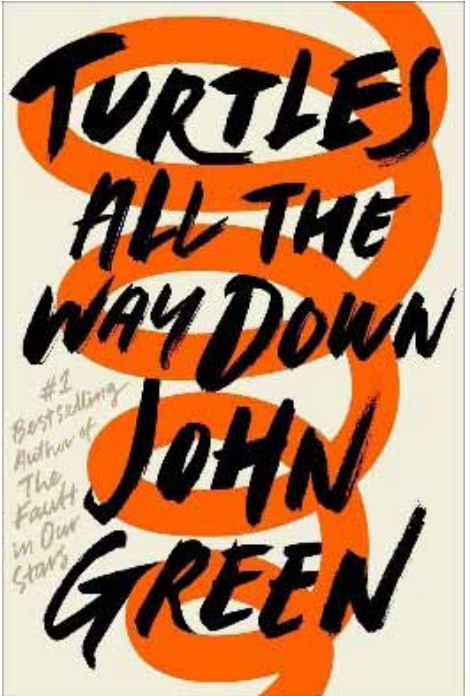
I have to admit when it comes to young adult (YA) author John Green, I can be a bit biased. Oh sure, I may be considered slightly older than a majority of his most devoted fans, but I am from Indianapolis--Green's hometown and setting of his most recent novel, Turtles All the Way Down. It takes more than hometown roots to win me over though, which Green has managed to do time and again. His latest offering is no exception.

Meet Aza Holmes, 16-year-old amateur detective on the trail of a criminal billionaire who just happens to be the father of her childhood crush, Davis Pickett. With quirky best friend Daisy prodding her at every turn, Aza sets out to find the absconded fugitive and collect the \$100,000 bounty. Aza's plans become muddled, however, as she finds herself once again falling for the charming and introspective Davis.

Where other YA authors may stop at typical teenage hijinks in a man-on-the-run caper, Green presses further, introducing the reader to a world of mental illness and self-inflicted injury through Aza's obsessive-compulsive disorder. Terrified of contracting C. difficile colitis, Aza is compelled to tear at the same wound on her finger several times a day, convinced she can halt the advancing

bacteria by bleeding out over and over again. This compulsion invades nearly every thought and action Aza experiences.

Green's familiar traits (sharp dialogue, wacky characters, mystery advancing the plot) are on full display in Turtles, yet Green consistently aims higher than hackneyed coming-of-age tropes. He transcends the banal,



Turtles All The Way Down

deconstructing the YA genre while elevating it at the same time. What I enjoy most about Green's work is his deep dissatisfaction with mere replication. I truly believe he would rather not tell a story at all than tell one we may already recognize.

Although good ol' midwestern pride may have served as an introduction to Green's work, it is the earnestness, heart and authenticity infused throughout that had me waiting in line with the young'uns, fervently anticipating his first new book in five years.

To check out Turtles All the Way Down, also available in eBook format, or browse any of our other fiction titles, please visit the library to apply for your free library card. •



Jeff Huttinger

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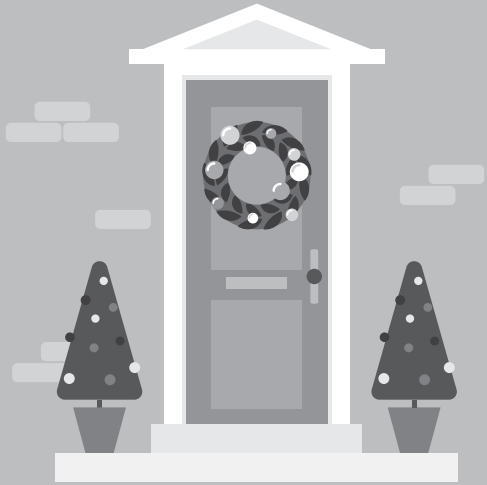
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Fiona

themselves in a terrifying, lonely new world. They are supremely deserving and appreciative of a second chance at life. When you adopt, you save a life... and in turn, enrich your own.

Beautiful **Fiona** was rescued from a hoarding case, where 118 animals were pulled from a single-family home. While Fiona has lived with other cats and dogs, she would prefer to be the only kitty in the house. The only thing that would make it better is if she went to a home with a dog. Fiona loves every dog that she meets, rubbing up against them. Fiona has tested positive for FIV. Cats with FIV+ often get passed over because people feel worried about the diagnosis. However, given proper care and attention, an FIV+ cat will live the same lifespan as an FIV negative cat. The disease is extremely hard to transmit from cat to cat and it requires direct blood contact (typically from a deep bite wound). It is not transmissible to humans or any other species. Fiona has spent too many years looking for a loving home. If you can offer this sweet deserving kitty some love and attention, Fiona is waiting to meet you.



Monkey

Monkey is an awesome kitty. He gets lots of compliments on his cuteness, his acrobatic tricks, and more importantly on his personality. Monkey is a very loving, playful, energetic and outgoing boy who enjoys affection. When being petted, he will purr loudly to show you his appreciation. Monkey adapts easily to new environments, and loves playing with other kitties and with his toys. He is looking forward to finding his forever home and giving you lots of love and happiness.

Flora appeared in a backyard garden, skinny and desperate for love. She was fed in the yard for two weeks and gained weight, and then went to her foster's house (inside only). Flora is now normal weight, loves affection and has adjusted to being inside. She is respectful of her "foster sister" senior cat and loves to play with toys. Flora learned how to play from the grumpy senior cat in the household and now she loves to play with all the foster kittens. She would



Mila

be fine as an only cat, but would appreciate other cat(s) to play with, especially kittens.

Mila is a super sweet girl who loves to purr. She is very gentle and wants to curl up next to her human or her BFF kitty. Her favorite toys include balls, wand toys and string. She enjoys wrestling with other kitties as well as getting cleaned. Your petting session will be rewarded by purrs and her butt going up in the air. At her young age, Mila needs to be adopted into a home with another kitty.

Ernesto is a snuggly guy with the cutest



Ernesto



Flora

little chirpy meow. He was shy at first, but is totally turning into a lap kitty! He loves other cats and lives with a dog, but is not really crazy about dogs. Ernesto would do best in a home with another kitty and would love to find a home with his brother Barnaby.

Barnaby is a snuggly, outgoing kitty with lots of character. He was bottle-fed, so he is very attached to humans. Raised in a foster home with lots of other animals, he loves the companionship of other cats and dogs. Barnaby would be a wonderful



Barnaby



Freya

companion for your current cat. If you do not already have a cat and are looking for a pair of kittens, Barnaby would love to find a home with his brother Ernesto.

Freya is one of the most strikingly beautiful cats that we've ever seen. She is as radiant on the inside as outside. Easygoing, playful and super-affectionate, Freya is a lap cat who is looking to be your one and only love. She has a confident, outgoing personality and warms to everyone quickly. She can spend long hours at the window gazing at out at the world, but would be just as happy to spend hours on your lap getting her soft, silky coat petted and groomed. Freya is an exceptional girl

who is waiting to join her forever family.

These kitties are available for adoption through Kitten Rescue, one of the largest cat rescue groups in Southern California. All our kitties are spayed/neutered, microchipped, tested for FeLV and FIV, dewormed and current on their vaccinations. For additional information and to see these or our other kittens and cats, please check our website www.kittenrescue.org or email us at mail@kittenrescue.org.

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