

Torrance Tribune

The Weekly Newspaper of Torrance

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Torrance Resident Helps Donate Life for Rose Bowl Parade Float



Torrance's Tammy Rusznak (pictured on the right) helped decorate the Donate Life Rose Parade Float at a special First Look event last week in Pasadena. Tammy was a kidney recipient, as was Holly Miyagawa to her left. The float, named "The Gift of Time," is the centerpiece of a national effort to reach a broad audience with the message that organ, eye and tissue donations save and heal lives.

Torrance Has a New Police Chief

The City of Torrance announced last week the appointment of Eve R. Irvine as its new Police Chief. Since starting her career as a Police Cadet in 1982 with the City of Inglewood Police Department, Irvine has risen the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Chief and is now Torrance's 10th Police Chief. She will receive her new badge at the January 9 City Council meeting, which begins at 7 p.m. in City Hall.

According to City Manager LeRoy J. Jackson, "We were fortunate to have an outstanding selection of internal and external candidates; Chief Irvine was the most outstanding. Irvine brings a breadth of experience, exemplary training, continued education and excellent interpersonal skills to lead a department that has remained committed to protecting the public's safety."

In May, 2011 Irvine was sworn in as Police Chief for the Manhattan Beach Police Department. Prior to that, she became a nationally recognized expert in the area of Domestic Violence and worked assignments in Sex Crimes/Child Abuse, Assaults and Robbery in her work as a Detective for the Inglewood Police Department.

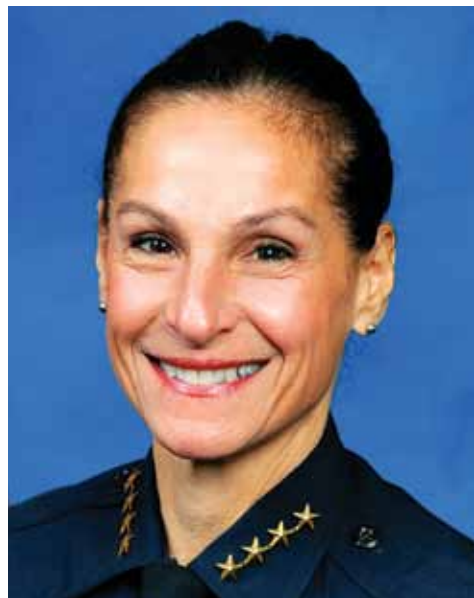
In 1993, Irvine attended the highly acclaimed Delinquency Control Institute at the University of Southern California. She was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 1994. As a Sergeant, Chief Irvine worked in the Patrol Bureau as a Field Supervisor and Watch Commander.

In 1995, Irvine transferred to the Administrative Bureau, as supervisor over Police Training and Personnel. In 1997, she was appointed Acting Lieutenant and transferred to the Patrol Bureau as a Watch Commander. In 1999 she served as Adjutant to the Chief of Police. In addition, she commanded the Community Affairs Section, Internal Affairs and also served as Press Information Officer for the Department. Irvine is a recognized expert in the field of Media Relations.

A graduate of the University of Redlands and University of La Verne, Irvine received a Bachelor of Science in Business and Management and a Master of Business Administration. She is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and California's POST Command College.

Irvine will oversee the department beginning January 8, which currently employs 227 sworn safety staff and 128 civilian staff. She currently serves as the President of the South Bay Police and Fire Memorial Foundation, and is a Board Member on the Governor's Medal of Valor Review Board. She also serves as a member of the California Police Chief's Association Law and Legislative Committee and the Training Committee, and is the Los Angeles County Police Chief's Association's representative on the Los Angeles County Peace Officer Memorial Foundation.

— Content and Photo: Torrance PD •



Torrance's New Police Chief Eve Irvine.

Weekend Forecast

Friday

Sunny
70°/52°



Saturday

Sunny
66°/53°



Sunday

AM Clouds/
PM Sun
64°/52°



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, Medicaid 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

See Health Care Law, page 3

Police Briefs

Police Reports

DUI Checkpoint/Saturation Patrol Results

The Torrance Police Department Traffic Unit conducted a DUI Saturation Patrol on December 15 between the hours of 6 p.m. and 3 a.m. High Visibility Enforcement efforts like this have a deterrent effect, lowering the incidents of impaired driving. The deployment resulted in 20 vehicle enforcement stops, two DUI alcohol suspects arrested, and one citation issued.

The Police Department Traffic Unit followed this up with a DUI/Driver's License Checkpoint on December 21 in the 5400 Block of Torrance Boulevard between 8 p.m. and 3 a.m. Checkpoints are placed in locations that have the greatest opportunity for achieving drunk and drugged driving deterrence and provide the greatest safety for officers and the public.

During the DUI checkpoint, 962 vehicles passed through, with 852 drivers screened, 13 drivers cited/arrested for operating a vehicle unlicensed or while suspended/revoked, and 18 citations issued.

– Source: Torrance PD

Major Traffic Collision on Hawthorne Boulevard

On December 24, at approximately 5:43 p.m., officers from the Torrance Police Department responded to a major injury traffic collision involving a motorcycle and vehicle on Hawthorne Boulevard and Emerald Street.

On arrival, officers discovered that a 2003 Honda Accord Sedan, driven by a 52-year-old female resident from Hawthorne, had collided with a 2007 Honda CBR600 motorcycle, ridden by a 52-year-old male resident from Torrance.

The initial investigation indicates both vehicles were travelling northbound on Hawthorne Boulevard approaching Emerald Street when the collision occurred. According to statements and physical evidence at the scene, it appears the Honda Sedan was attempting to make a right turn onto eastbound Emerald Street from an improper lane position when it collided with the motorcyclist.

The motorcyclist, who sustained major injuries, was treated by Torrance Fire

Department personnel at the scene and transported to a local hospital where he is listed in critical condition. The sole occupant of the Honda Sedan was not injured in the collision. Alcohol or drugs do not appear to be a factor in the collision at this time.

Northbound Hawthorne Boulevard between Torrance Boulevard and Garnet Street was closed for approximately three hours during the collision investigation.

This collision is being investigated by the Torrance Police Department's Traffic Division under the command of Captain Martin Vukotic, Commander of the Special Operations Bureau. Anyone with information regarding this collision is encouraged to contact the Torrance Police Department's Traffic Division at (310) 618-5557.

– Source: Torrance PD

Fatal Traffic Collision on Anza and Lomita

On December 23, in the early morning hours, officers from the Torrance Police Department responded to a major traffic collision at the intersection of Anza Avenue and Lomita Blvd. On arrival, officers discovered that a white 2013 Kawasaki motorcycle driven by a 21-year-old male, traveling westbound on Lomita Boulevard at Anza Avenue, had collided with the west curb-line, adjacent to Heroes Park. The 21-year-old male sustained major injuries and was treated by Torrance Fire Department personnel at the scene and he, unfortunately, succumbed to his injuries.

The southbound lanes of traffic on Anza Avenue between 226th Street and Lomita were closed for approximately six and a half hours during the investigation.

This collision is being investigated by the Torrance Police Department's Traffic Division under the command of Captain Martin Vukotic, Commander of the Special Operations Bureau. Anyone with information regarding this collision is encouraged to contact the Torrance Police Department's Traffic Division at (310) 618-5557.

– Source: Torrance PD •

Sunday, December 10

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/10 10:30:00 AM & 12/11 8:05:00 AM 23800 BLOCK MADISON ST. Suspect(s) takes victim's vehicle's battery.

Vandalism 12/10 9:26 AM 3400 BLOCK 229TH PL. Suspect(s) use spray paint to graffiti city sidewalk.

Monday, December 11

Burglary-Commercial Betw. 12/11 10:00:00 PM & 12/12 6:45:44 AM 17200 BLOCK CRENSHAW BLVD. Suspect(s) smashes front window for entry and takes property/register, cash.

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/11 8:10:00 PM & 12/11 8:13:40 PM 2900 BLOCK 235TH ST. Suspect attempts to forcibly open door but is scared off by vehicle's alarm.

Auto Theft-All Betw. 12/11 7:00:00 PM & 12/12 1:00:00 PM 186TH ST & AMIE AVE. Stolen Vehicle: '96 Mercury Cougar.

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/11 4:00:00 PM & 12/11 7:00:00 PM 17200 BLOCK YUKON AVE. Suspect(s) enters by unknown means and takes property/ladder, tools, wire.

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/11 1:00:00 PM & 12/12 7:00:00 AM 25800 BLOCK SKYLARK DR. Suspect(s) enters unlocked vehicle, ransacks, and takes property/garage door opener, keys.

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/11 11:00:00 AM & 12/11 1:20:00 PM 2500 BLOCK REDONDO BEACH BLVD. Suspect(s) pries open driver's side door for entry and takes property/unknown loss at time of report.

Theft Betw. 12/11 8:15:00 AM & 12/11 8:45:00 AM 2900 BLOCK SEPULVEDA BLVD. Suspect(s) defeats lock and takes property from locker/cell phone, watch.

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/11 2:00:00 AM & 12/11 10:30:00 AM 2600 BLOCK 235TH ST. Suspect(s) smashes rear passenger window for entry and takes property/laptop, bag.

Tuesday, December 12

Vandalism Betw. 12/12 10:30:00 PM & 12/13 2:00:00 PM 24500 BLOCK HAWTHORNE BLVD. Suspect(s) uses a pellet gun to smash business window.

Vandalism Betw. 12/12 8:00:00 PM & 12/12 8:02:35 PM 24400 BLOCK HAWTHORNE BLVD. Suspect(s) uses unknown object to smash business window.

Vandalism Betw. 12/12 7:50:00 PM & 12/12 7:56:26 PM 20600 BLOCK HAWTHORNE BLVD. Suspect(s) uses unknown object to smash business window.

Vandalism Betw. 12/12 7:50:00 PM & 12/12 7:51:44 PM 20900 BLOCK HAWTHORNE BLVD. Suspect(s) uses unknown object to smash business window.

Theft Betw. 12/12 7:30:00 PM & 12/12 9:10:00 PM 3500 BLOCK CARSON ST. Suspect(s) defeats lock and takes property from locker/cash, bag, purse, keys, credit cards.

Vandalism Betw. 12/12 6:00:00 PM & 12/13 7:08:36 AM 18800 BLOCK HAWTHORNE BLVD. Suspect(s) uses unknown object to smash business window.

Burglary-Commercial 12/12 9:24 AM 3400 BLOCK SEPULVEDA BLVD. Suspect(s) enters by unknown means and pries open lock box/no loss.

Theft Betw. 12/12 7:30:00 AM & 12/12 10:00:00 AM 24200 BLOCK NEECE AVE. Suspect(s) enters open garage and takes property from unlocked vehicle and garage/shop vac, ladder, ID, building access cards.

Wednesday, December 13

Theft Betw. 12/13 5:45:00 PM & 12/13 6:50:00 PM 2200 BLOCK TORRANCE BLVD. Suspect(s) removes unsecured benches from storefront.

Burglary-Commercial Betw. 12/13 2:00:00 PM & 12/14 8:50:00 AM 25200 BLOCK CRENSHAW BLVD. Suspect(s) attempts to pry open front door for entry.

Burglary-Auto Betw. 12/13 2:00:00 PM & 12/14 8:00:00 AM 100 BLOCK PASEO DE LA CONCHA. Suspect(s) enters by unknown means and takes property/air compressor, knife, headphones, sunglasses, clothes.

Theft Betw. 12/13 2:00:00 PM & 12/13 2:05:00 PM 16600 BLOCK OGRAM AVE. Suspect(s) takes property from porch/delivered parcel. •

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Calendar of Events

- Deadline for Calendar items is the prior Thursday by noon. Calendar items are \$1 per word. Email listings to marketing@heraldpublications.com. We take Visa and MasterCard.
- THURSDAY, DEC. 28**
- All Torrance Libraries – CLOSED for New Year
- FRIDAY, DEC. 29**
- All Torrance Libraries – CLOSED for New Year
- SATURDAY, DEC. 30**
- Torrance Certified Farmers’ Market at Wilson Park, 8:00 AM. – 1:00 PM., 2200 Crenshaw Blvd., Between Carson St. & Sepulveda, Call: 310-781-7520.
 - All Torrance Libraries – CLOSED for New Year
- SUNDAY, DEC. 31**
- HAPPY NEW YEAR’S EVE!!
- All Torrance Libraries – CLOSED for New Year
- MONDAY, JAN. 1**
- HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!
 - All Torrance Libraries – CLOSED for New Year
- TUESDAY, JAN. 2**
- Torrance Certified Farmers’ Market at Wilson Park, 8:00 AM. – 1:00 PM., 2200 Crenshaw Blvd., Between Carson St. & Sepulveda, Call: 310-781-7520.
- WEDNESDAY, JAN. 3**
- Science Fiction & Fantasy Book Group, 8:00 PM. – 9:00 PM., Katy Geissert Civic Center Library, 3301 Torrance Blvd. Call: 310-618-5950.
- THURSDAY, JAN. 4**
- Environmental Quality Commission , 7:00 PM. – 9:00 PM., Commission Meeting Room, 3031 Torrance Blvd. •

Health Care Law from front page

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 emergency 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 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

See Health Care Law, page 6



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

Sports

Up and Adam

Torrance Schools Enjoy Another Fantastic Year of Athletics in 2017

By Adam Serrao

Time flies when you’re having fun and there is certainly no doubting the fact that the athletes in high schools around the city of Torrance had their share of fun throughout the year of 2017. It’s amazing that the year has already approached its ending, but it hasn’t done so without some amazing memories being made along the way. As usual, the athletes from Torrance High, South High, West High and North High all took turns providing their schools and their fans with amazing displays of athleticism that won’t be soon forgotten. Now, with the year coming to a close, it is as good a time as any to take a look back at those defining moments and the athletes who worked so tirelessly to achieve them.

Though this year’s basketball season is once again underway, who can forget the team from West High that took the Pioneer League by storm one year ago? A team that opened the year on a three-game winning streak showed early on that it had what it took to eventually take home a Pioneer League championship under head coach Neal Perlmutter. The Warriors’ success didn’t end with that championship, either. The basketball team, led by Noah Carroll, Brandon Thomas, and Ricky Turner at the time, took to the playoffs and caught fire. Three straight postseason victories landed West in the CIF Southern Section Division 4AA championship game against the Blair Vikings. Behind 30 points from breakout star Alex Mishaw, the Warriors came away with a 65-54 victory for the school’s first-ever boys’ basketball championship. West High fans can continue to expect amazing play from Mishaw, who is only in his junior year with the Warriors this season.

The Torrance Tartars boys’ baseball team may have taken home the Pioneer League crown in the division, but it was the South High Lady Spartans softball team that stole the show last year. Under head coach Tony Flores, the Lady Spartans lost only seven games all season long on their way to a Pioneer League championship. Little did players like star pitcher Maddy Stockslager know that the team’s divisional championship wasn’t the only one that South High was in store for this year. Behind Stockslager’s brilliant pitching prowess, the Lady Spartans mowed teams down in the postseason. Four victories later, including a semifinal win over its rivals from West High, South found itself in the Division 5 championship game against Heritage Christian. Stockslager pitched all seven innings and struck out 14 batters on her team’s way to a championship victory. The Lady Warriors (22-8, 5-3) may have had a great season in their own right behind the play of Mailee Newman, but in the end it was the Spartans who beat out their rivals and all others on their way to a CIF softball championship.

Under the bright lights on the football field, it was the North High Saxons stealing the show last season. Behind senior quarterback Sean Sigala and the elite play of running back Saeed Galloway, the Saxons rallied for an 8-3 record and went undefeated in league play (5-0) to capture a Pioneer League championship. Unfortunately for North, a loss in the first round of the playoffs soon followed, but ending the regular season with a six-game winning streak was certainly just one way that the Saxons displayed their dominance in 2017.

The South High Spartans showed utter dominance in both the sports of volleyball and soccer in 2017. The boys’ volleyball team put up a remarkable 29-6 record under head coach Aaron Saldana and not only took home a Pioneer League championship, but also made it to the Division 2 semifinals. Not

to be outdone by the boys, the Lady Spartans took home a Pioneer League championship of their own with an 18-15 record while riding the hot play of team captains Lizzy Smith and Kristen Fritsche.

South’s dominance in volleyball may not have yielded any CIF championships, but the Lady Spartans soccer team certainly made up for that. Not only did South High’s girls’ soccer go 22-1-2 on the year, but it also dominated the Division 3 playoffs on the way to a 1-0 CIF championship victory over Claremont. Senior forward Claire Grouwinkle led the team all season long on offense and scored the team’s lone goal in the 1-0 championship victory in overtime. The South High boys’ soccer team (21-2-2) dominated the Pioneer League on the way to a divisional title of its own—but despite the excellent performances of players like Will Hayward, Kohl Kutsch, and Dara Fakhfour, the Spartans wound up losing in the third round of the CIF playoffs.

The city of Torrance and its high schools create far too many memories on a year-to-year basis to all be listed in just one article. With so many gifted athletes, coaches and teams, it is simply impossible to list every single meaningful moment. For instance, who can forget about the West High Warriors boys’ cross country team that became the first in school history to capture a state title? Certainly not Rory Abberton, Andrew Hazzard, Ryan Vo or any of the other runners who contributed to a team that made history and held their own parade that went down the streets of Torrance in honor of their victory.

Each year brings with it the unique ability to make memories with remarkable performances in any and every sport from football to track and field. Sure, it may be sad that 2017 is over and yet another year has zoomed right past us all. The arrival of 2018, though, is sure to bring with it just as many invaluable memories and remarkable performances from new and experienced athletes just the same.

– Aserrao6@yahoo.com •

“Cheers to a new year
and another chance
for us to get it right.”
– OPRAH WINFREY



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TerriAnn in Torrance

Happy New Year, Torrance! It's the Time for New Beginnings

By TerriAnn Ferren

As Christmas 2017 comes and goes we turn our focus to the New Year. There are many traditions for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day that people have kept throughout the years. For me, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day mean so very much--from cherished traditions to the possibilities for the future. How will we usher in 2018 and all it will bring for our lives? What do you do New Year's Eve? And what makes an activity or celebration a tradition? How often must a celebration occur to become a tradition?

Do you watch East Coast tape-delay New Year's Eve celebrations on West Coast time? Or do you, as many people have told me, celebrate at nine o'clock our time, midnight East Coast time--and simply call it a night? Somehow, that just doesn't seem right to me.

This year I asked my parents, Tom and Teddy Lancaster, if they remembered anything from when they were growing up about New Year's Eve and they first just looked at each other. Then my mom said, "I think we are just going to be home. I do eat my 12 grapes." My family's tradition comes from Spain and consists of eating 12 grapes--one grape for every stroke of the clock at midnight for good luck in the New Year. My mom would give everyone a small bunch of grapes well before midnight so when the clock began to strike, everyone was ready with their grapes. From experience, let me suggest one tip if you decide to introduce this tradition into your family or circle of friends. Purchase *small* grapes. Large grapes really end up being a mouthful and are very difficult to finish in a minute! Actually, it is fun to eat 12 grapes in a minute. I highly recommend you start this tradition because children can join in too. I asked my mom how she ate her grapes and my dad chimed in and said, "One at a time." Very funny. "At the stroke of midnight as the clock chimes, we eat one grape at a time and hope we get them all down before the last stroke of midnight."

I asked my daddy if he remembered doing anything special New Year's Eve when he was growing up and he said, "No. I was always out celebrating with my buddies." When I asked him what he was doing, he wouldn't tell me. My mom said when she was a teenager she and her best friend (my aunt) JoAnn would go to the movies and celebrate that way. "Actually when I started dating you [my mom] is when I started remembering. That is when my life began," said my daddy. Yes, he actually said that. Then my mom told me, "The year before we got married, we went to the Palladium and we danced and everybody was there. I remembered we brought in the New Year and it was very exciting because I knew I was getting married in the New Year." Sweet memories.

Joycie Sharman hails from Indiana, Pennsyl-

vania and told me she will again make, as she has every year, pork and sauerkraut on New Year's Day, "We celebrate the Pennsylvania Dutch tradition of having pork and sauerkraut on New Year's Day for good luck not because we are Dutch, but because everyone in Pennsylvania seems to follow the tradition."

My friend Carolyn Chun told me, "On New Year's Eve, my family eats 'good luck noodles.' That pretty much consisted of soba,

kept everyone laughing with his sharp wit, and Mrs. Johnson spent time in the kitchen visiting, cooking and laughing with the other women. Their home, always still decorated for Christmas, was filled with Santa Claus decorations, mangers, trains, stockings, lights, candles, holiday tablecloths, miniature villages, Christmas trees and everything else you can imagine. It truly was like a Christmas fairyland!



Happy New Year 2018!

a buckwheat noodle with a soy sauce/chicken base soup with all the trimmings of green onion, kamaboko, sliced scrambled egg and shredded chicken. According to my mom, this was supposed to give us good luck and prosperity, and I think health too, all year long. My mom would make it and we go over and eat it for dinner. Yum." Carolyn went on to explain that on New Year's morning, they would make Ozoni (mochi soup), a rice paddy with some kind of sauce, either soy sauce, chicken soup, or plain. The mochi could be steamed, fried or cooked in a soup. It sounds to me like they are eating and cooking all through New Year's Eve and Day. Meticulous cleaning and then hanging tangerines or oranges are also part of the custom that brings good luck.

I asked 11-year-old Madison Jane what she likes to do on New Year's Eve and received the obvious answer, "I like to stay up late and drink sparkling apple cider." Actually, that models what my sister Linda and I would do. Staying up late was always a treat and being up near midnight made us feel grown up somehow.

When I was a teenager, we would celebrate with my parents at their friends' Bill and Charlotte Johnson's house in Torrance for their New Year's Eve block party. I can remember Mr. Johnson always told jokes and

Nina Melazzo-Siems, who moved to New York from Torrance told me, "Bobby [her husband] and I have never gone to Times Square for New Year's Eve, and quite frankly would never even consider it! It is packed with people and that is not my scene. For many years now, we have spent New Year's Eve with very dear friends literally in our pajamas! They used to live right upstairs from us in the same building and we would take the elevator up in our robes and slippers! We would try and outdo each other every year with the wackiest PJs. It was great fun. We do usually have champagne and if we're feeling flush, a little caviar too!"

Now, New Year's Eve is quite different for my sister Linda than when we were small. She told me, "I like to go out on New Year's Eve, whether it is to dance or party. And if I am home, I get out pots and pans and 'ring it in.'" Actually, I can't imagine her doing that, but then we don't live that near each other, so I can't check it out. Linda's son and my nephew David Norton, an attorney, said, "I am trying to remember what I have done recently. Nothing crazy really, but I don't have a ritual--maybe I should. Up until recently, I have been home from school. I haven't thought about it this year at all. I am going to have to figure something out."

One of the most interesting New Year's

stories comes from International singing star Francie, who is originally from Brazil. Because it is summer and very hot in Brazil during New Year's, everyone wears white. Francie explained, "We don't have snow. I didn't see snow until I came here to California. We would decorate our Christmas trees with cotton balls to simulate snow." She went on to share, "Just before midnight, many people--including my family and friends--go down to the beach and while holding hands, jump eight waves...making wishes on each wave for the New Year, all dressed in white. In fact, even our underwear is white!" (I am not sure, but I think that is too much information). What a beautiful sight that must be on the beach with everyone jumping waves! After the wave-jumping, they crack open the champagne and toast the New Year. Sign me up.

The oddest tradition of all came from Torrance residents John and Martha. Martha told me they really don't have any old traditions, but in the past have been doing something called "pumpkin chuckin" where at midnight they throw un-carved pumpkins left over from Halloween and fall decorating over the hill. Martha did add, "I always said a prayer at midnight thanking God for my family and friends and pray they will be healthy and happy in the New Year." If I were Martha, I would have prayed that I don't tell you where they actually did that in Torrance! But they haven't chucked pumpkins in several years now because they go camping over New Year's. "It was fun doing it and checking in the morning to see how far they [the pumpkins] went down the hill. And then another New Year's Eve, John dressed up as the New Year's baby complete with diaper, sash across his chest with the New Year written on it, with a cigar. Our kids and their friends were in high school at the time. We scared them for life with that one. It was pretty funny," said Martha.

With all the many old and new traditions we have for the New Year, the toasting, the kissing, the parade watching, the parties and dinners with friends, we share one thing in common: we reflect back on the year past and forward to the year ahead with hope, wishes for health, love and joy. The year 2017 was filled with memories for each and every one of us, and 2018 year will be a year filled with many more.

"The first day of the year is special, a fresh beginning for sure. Possibilities lay before us--the unknown success so pure. Being thankful for the year that's past--and trusting the one ahead--filled with blessings and opportunities to serve anew." Try something new this New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Begin a tradition with your family and friends as you usher in the New Year, a year of new beginnings and possibilities for us all. Happy 2018, Torrance! •

2018

Happy New Year!

We wish everyone a safe and happy new year.

Herald Publications Holiday Schedule

Our offices will be closed the following days for the holidays.

Thursday, December 28 | Friday, December 29 | Monday, January 1

**EL SEGUNDO HERALD* • MANHATTAN BEACH SUN
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Chocolate Peppermint Truffle Tart

Recipe provided by BPT

Ingredients

COOKIE CRUST

- 9 ounces chocolate wafer cookies
- 5 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon Sugar In The Raw
- 1 tablespoon Stevia In The Raw

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT FILLING

- 12 ounces unsweetened chocolate, roughly chopped
- 5 tablespoons cold butter, cut into cubes

- 1 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 cup Sugar In The Raw
- 3/4 cup Stevia In The Raw
- 1 1/2 teaspoons peppermint extract

WHIPPED CREAM

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons Sugar In The Raw
- 1 teaspoon Stevia In The Raw



Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a 9-inch round springform pan with removable bottom and sides. In the bowl of a food processor, pulse chocolate cookies until fine. Transfer to a bowl and stir in melted butter, Sugar In The Raw and Stevia In The Raw until well combined. Press mixture into bottom and up the sides of pan. Bake crust until firm, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

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2. In a medium bowl, add chocolate and butter. In a small saucepan bring cream, Sugar In The Raw and Stevia In The Raw to a boil, whisking constantly until completely dissolved. Pour cream over the chocolate and butter and whisk until chocolate has melted. Stir in peppermint and pour into crust. Chill at least one hour.
3. In a large bowl beat cream, Sugar In The Raw and Stevia In The Raw on high speed until stiff peaks form, about 1 minute. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve tart. Slice tart, top with whipped cream and dust with cocoa powder. •

Politically Speaking

One Man's Opinion

Nobody Should Be Shocked By Trump's, Ambassador's U.N. Antics

By Cristian Vasquez

When United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, on behalf of President Trump, warned that Washington would take action against the countries that voted to reject the President's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the criticism came from all angles. From anger to indignation, the United States was condemned for not only moving the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, but for Haley's vindictive tone against the nations that voted against the move. Here's the thing: Since when is a UN vote binding? Does it really matter, for the purposes of what the United States wants, that the UN opposed our position?

Yes, this makes for horrible diplomacy and it is a direct contradiction to the spirit and purpose for being a member of the UN. However, for the people kicking and screaming about this bully tactic, why all the noise? It's not the first time our leaders imposed their will on the world regardless of UN sentiment. Let's not forget about the decision by President George Bush to invade Iraq despite opposition from the UN and from some of our nation's strongest allies. Years before President Bush's debacle, President Bill Clinton and his administration--despite knowing about the massacre occurring in Rwanda in 1994--dragged their feet to act and prevent this atrocity despite the willingness of the UN to intervene. More recently President Obama decided to bomb Syria despite a UN Charter that military force should not be used unless

in self-defense, or if the Security Council approves the attack.

I accept it's rude, unacceptable and childish to go around threatening people, or countries, that disagree with you. But to my friends on the left looking for any reason to attack Number 45, remember that the actions of this administration mirror those of his predecessors. The UN has been treated like a yellow traffic light by every president. Each administration will for the most part respect its symbolism--but when in a rush, they'll bypass rules in order to obtain the end goal. So what's the outcry really about? Are people mad that our country picks and chooses when to cooperate with the UN--or because it's done by a president they don't like?

Democrats are making the same mistake they committed back 2004 when they were so busy bashing President Bush at every opportunity that they never developed a solid platform--nor nominate a great candidate--and we were stuck with John Kerry and Bush in the general election. Democrats need to end that fixation to bash President Trump and get to work finding an ideal candidate for the White House and developing an agenda that will fix the damage caused by 45 at home and abroad. The way that Haley behaved in the UN is unacceptable, but sadly it is not exclusive to just this administration. Furthermore, it would be tragic if the Democrats gave President Trump another four years simply because all they did was spend their time pointing fingers and complaining. •

Another Man's Opinion

We've Reached Armageddon Yet Again, According to Resistance

By Duane Plank

"Armageddon!" screamed southpaw Nancy Pelosi, the Cali Senator and Minority Leader of the House when she got wind of the details of the recently passed tax cut Mr. Trump adroitly guided through Congress.

The world, she ranted, is sure to end because there will be tax breaks for most Americans, including...yup, the wealthy donor class. The very wealthy Pelosi pontificated that the little guy got hosed again, and the lefties all opened their resist Trump playbook, parroting DNC talking points, fanning out to saturate lib-friendly media outposts like CNN and MSNBC with their lock-step blatherings.

A practiced master of understatement, the sardonic Pelosi thundered that "the tax bill that the Republicans put forth is probably one of the worst bills in the history of the United States of America!"

Truth be told, the American tax system has been considered a sadistic joke for a very long time. A killer corporate tax on business entities strangling those trying to run a successful business and create jobs for legal American workers. Burdensome taxes forced many companies to move assets, profits and jobs out of the good old U.S. of A.

Trump's tax plan shaves the corporate tax rate from the astronomical rate of 35 percent to a more manageable 21. Middle-class families, as well as those hovering on the lower end of the money-making spectrum, will also catch a break. Yes, the wealthy types should also benefit. A win, win, win, right?

Unless you're an entrenched lefty on the tax and spend side. Those who think they are more

adept at spending your money than you are are howling about the trillions, they surmise, the tax cut will add to the already unconscionable national debt. How have the entrenched bureaucrats been doing with your money? Frittering it away on idiotic boondoggles, bullet trains going nowhere, taking your money and gleefully flushing it as they graze at the bureaucratic trough.

Yeah, bureaucrats are always the smartest folks in the room, right?

As he celebrated his first major legislative victory, Trump crowed that "we are bringing the entrepreneur back into this country. Ultimately, what does it mean? It means jobs, jobs, jobs." After the final passing of the plan last week, bucks-up corporations like AT&T, Boeing and the scallywag cheaters at Wells Fargo floated the notion that they would reward employees with bonuses, with the AT&T folks claiming they would gift 200,000 employees with \$1,000 bonuses.

Aa 2017 fades into the gloaming, the capstone is put on one of the most vitriolic years in American politics. Starting with the coronation of Trump, who stunned nearly everyone with his stomping of the somnambulant Queen Hillary. That event forced the leftists to search for an answer to why the chosen one tanked.

Within hours, Dems and their bosom buddies in the mainstream media started concocting a yarn that it was the Russians, and mastermind "Rasputin Putin," who delivered the Trump electoral victory.

More than a year later, after wasting millions our tax dollars, they still have a "nothing burger" on collusion.

Happy New Year! •

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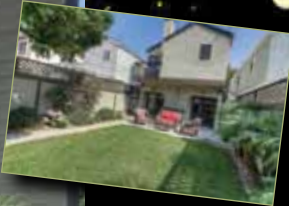
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