

SANDPIPER

CITY MANAGER TERMINATION

Don Mosier | Rimini Road and Bud Emerson | Klish Way

The City is now out more than \$150,000 and down one senior management employee after its decision, announced at the Feb. 16 council meeting, to terminate city manager Christa “CJ” Johnson without cause, four days after her one-year anniversary. Personnel matters are legally shrouded in a fair amount of secrecy, but we can report key facts, based on the city attorney’s statements that brought the Council out of closed session on Feb. 16, and records the City provided to the Sandpiper.

The Council had previously conducted a performance evaluation of the city manager at the six-month mark. Indications are that it was a positive evaluation, since it was on the Council’s closed session agenda only once, and the city attorney announced “no reportable action” from that agenda item on Aug. 3, 2020.

The one-year performance evaluation was a different story with a new council majority in place. The evaluation first appeared on a closed session agenda on Jan. 27, 2021, and again on closed session agendas for Feb. 1, Feb. 3, Feb. 9, and Feb. 16, with “dismissal/ release” added to the description for the Feb. 16th session. The employment agreement signed by Johnson and the City provides that the city manager may not be terminated within 90 days of a council election, and there had been such an election on November 3. We can assume the termination decision was made during the February 3 closed session, since Johnson’s attorney sent an email to the City Attorney on February 5, asking for payments beyond what was due to Johnson under the terms of the employment agreement, including payout of unused sick leave, \$3000 for attorney’s fees, and a laptop. The email asserted there were “facts suggesting members of the City Council are in substantial breach” of provisions in the employment agreement that prohibit council members from interfering with the execution of the powers and duties of the Manager. In the council:city manager form of government adopted by Del Mar, the city council sets policy and the city manager implements the policy. Councilmembers are prohibited from directing staff efforts without the city manager’s approval. If this was the core issue resulting in CJ’s termination, current councilmembers should review the City Charter and the Municipal Code.



*Former City Manager Christa (CJ) Johnson terminated without cause on February 16.
Source: City of Del Mar press release.*

Termination without cause, per the employment agreement, entitled Johnson to \$120,000 (six months of her base pay), plus six months of continued health benefits, and payment for any unused vacation and management leave. (We don’t have information on the dollar amounts for the health insurance or unused leave.) The agreement did not entitle the Manager to payment for unused sick leave or attorney’s fees. However, payment of \$24,880 for accrued sick leave and up to \$7000 in attorney’s fees was announced at the February 16 council meeting in the City Attorney’s report-out from closed session under an agenda item listed as “significant exposure to litigation.” Presumably, the allegation of breach of contract by unspecified council members gave Johnson an opening to negotiate payments beyond those provided for in the employment agreement, resulting in an additional payment of \$31,880, plus a laptop.

The Council appointed Ashley Jones, who already carries two job titles – City Clerk and Administrative Services Director – as Interim City Manager, bypassing Assistant City Manager Kristen Crane without explanation. This leaves the City even more short-staffed, after COVID-19 related revenue drops required staff layoffs and furloughs – all while the City is challenged with significant workloads, especially with regard to April housing deadlines that will soon determine whether we are in compliance with state law or face significant consequences for non-compliance. ▣

CLIMATE CHANGE REALITY

As hope rises that we can see the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to be reminded that we have another challenge to deal with as soon as possible. As with the pandemic, changes in human behavior will be key to making progress.

It is getting hotter every year. Ice caps are melting, permafrost is thawing, extreme weather events are more frequent, wildfires are more persistent, intense and destructive. Human health is at risk, and we have wasted the last 4 years with regressive policies driven by climate change deniers. (See figure 1)

We in Del Mar should have heeded the early warnings generated by resident Dave Keeling who began measuring carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere in 1958. The “Keeling Curve” is the record of how rapidly we are generating carbon dioxide that traps heat in our atmosphere and, along with other gases like methane and refrigerants, cause the greenhouse effect. (See figure 2)

Because greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, persist in the atmosphere for many years, we are →

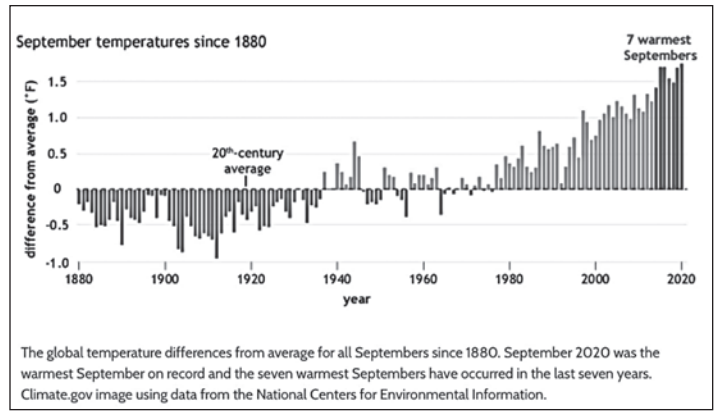


Figure 1 documents that September 2020 was the hottest on record.

running out of time to take effective action. Expert panels of climate scientists, including local representatives from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, caution that we are nearing the tipping point when changing human activity will be too late to slow global warming. This is the climate change reality: act now, or we will leave a badly damaged earth to our children and grandchildren.

There is hope. The County of San Diego adopted a goal of zero carbon consumption by 2035 in January, after years of poorly crafted Climate Action Plans. General Motors announced that they will only build electric vehicles by 2035. New building codes are being adopted across California that will eliminate natural gas use. Del Mar residents will soon have the option of 100% clean electricity supplied by the Clean Energy Alliance.

The ultimate challenge is how will you change your behavior to reduce your carbon footprint? Let's have a discussion of what we in Del Mar can do to help avoid a global catastrophe. As we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, we all need to listen to the science and take appropriate action. It will not be easy, but it should be less stressful than wearing a mask and being socially isolated for over a year. We can do this! □

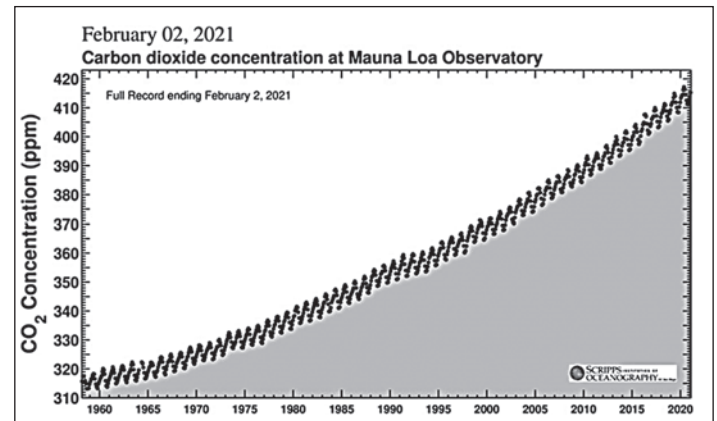


Figure 2. The Keeling Curve.

Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere in parts per million (ppm) measured at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii.



non-profit. Its purpose is to advocate the Del Mar Community Plan, to foster informed public and government decision-making regarding issues affecting the community of the City of Del Mar, and to encourage a social and political climate favorable to the protection of the community character of the City of Del Mar and its environs.

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ELECTRIFIED HOMES?

Ann Feeney | Rimini Road

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from burning fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas (which is primarily methane gas) are warming our planet and causing severe climate change. Scientists agree that we have only a few years to keep climate change from spiraling out of control. So, what can we do about it? Buildings are the second highest contributor to our GHG emissions, after transportation. Eliminating the burning of natural gas from buildings (“building electrification”) is therefore a major way in which we can reduce overall GHG emissions. Building all-electric homes is a clear path forward. Furthermore, when the Clean Energy Alliance begins service this spring, using 100% clean electricity will be an option for Del Mar residents.

To date, over 40 municipalities in California have passed some form of building code which restricts or completely eliminates the use of natural gas in new construction. Such all-electric homes are cheaper to build because no gas lines need to be installed, and there are long-term savings on energy bills. With rooftop solar panels, the cost is even lower! As an important co-benefit, indoor air quality is vastly improved, because the level of nitrous dioxide and other pollutants produced by gas appliances, including the methane gas emitted before the gas flame ignites on cooktops, is eliminated.

Building electrification is easy enough to achieve, and the all-electric technology is even better than that with gas appliances. Heating a house with heat pump space heating is not only cleaner, but more comfortable. With heat pump heaters, you automatically get air conditioning as well as heating with the same system. Often each room has a “minisplit” high on the wall, and these allow the temperature in each room to be independently controlled. Similarly, all-electric induction cooktops are amazing! I never thought I would want to give up my gas stove for cooking, but induction cooktops are faster to get to temperature, they shut off immediately when the pan is removed (and so are safer), and, of course, produce none of the indoor air pollution that a gas stove produces. We have one and we love it!

The Del Mar Sustainability Advisory Board last year unanimously recommended to the City Council that they adopt an all-electric ordinance for new construction, although those plans are on hold now due to budget concerns. The newly formed San Diego Building Electrification Coalition, a group of 20 environmental and architectural organizations, is advocating for all-electric building codes for the County as well as cities in the San Diego region. They have hosted webinars, and they are glad to give presentations for any organizations or cities that would like to know more about building electrification.

Get with the trend – go all-electric! ■

IN BRIEF

Opt In Energy

Clean Energy Alliance (CEA) will begin sending out notification letters to Del Mar residents in March prior to launching as the electricity provider in May. After the launch, billing and electricity transmission and distribution will continue to be provided by San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E). By state law, CEA will be the default electricity provider and residents may opt out to continue receiving electricity from SDG&E. Opt-out instructions are included in the four required mailings, two in March and April before CEA begins service, and two in June and July after CEA has started service. Opt-out rates for other Community Choice Energy providers has averaged about 5% of customers.

More details on the cost of energy and the choice of clean energy options will be available after the March 4th CEA Board meeting. Cleaner energy supply is a top priority for the city’s Climate Action Plan and provides local control over both pricing and energy efficiency measures. ■



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Material submitted must include the writer’s name, street address, and phone number, and should not exceed 400 words.

Contact us via e-mail or post at:

The Sandpiper, Box 2177, Del Mar, CA 92014
or at editor@delmarsandpiper.org

MARCH 2021

DEL MAR'S TRUE LOVES

Often, around Valentine's Day, the Del Mar Foundation hosts Meet & Greets at Shores Park for Del Mar's people and their dogs to socialize and have some fun. This year we still wanted to celebrate the special bonds between Del Mar people and their pets -- and since we could not meet in person, we invited Del Marians to send in favorite photos of their pets. The images that we received reminded us that we are fortunate to live in a community filled with so much love! Dogs predominated, but cats, a guinea pig, chickens, and fish are featured in the charming photo gallery on our website. To see the gallery, go to delmarfoundation.org and look for the link below the red heart.

The Foundation has long had volunteers and donors interested in making Del Mar a great place not just for humans, but for our animals as well – whether through the installation of dog-friendly water fountains, hosting Halloween dog parades (see the 2019 version at <http://bit.ly/delmardogs>) and Meet and Greets, or funding the removal of foxtails at Shores Park in 2020, which were causing health and safety problems for dogs. And our \$35,000 grant to the City in 2008 for acquisition of Shores Park was in step with our mission, which includes acquiring and preserving open space and improving parklands. Though the Shores Park master plan is still in our future, the park is enjoyed regularly by Del Mar's people, along with their dogs during designated hours. And someday we will have the next version of our Halloween Dog Parade, so no time like the present to start planning that prize-winning costume for your furry one! ■



Loki celebrating Valentine's Day. Courtesy DMF.

Approaching one year of the pandemic, teenagers feel hopeful about the vaccine, while having differing opinions on schools reopening and political leadership.

With COVID-19 restrictions, younger community members are feeling worn out. "I am feeling pandemic fatigue from sitting at my desk all day, constantly staring at the computer screen, not being able to leave my house as much, and not having separation between school and home," Jamie Chin, a sophomore at Westview, said.

In these tough times, teenagers appreciate social interaction. "I'm very grateful to have a good support system, and to be able to play tennis with my supportive teammates and coaches, in a safe environment," Payton Parker, a junior and tennis player at Torrey Pines High School, said.

While students appreciate extracurricular activities, many are not comfortable with schools reopening. "Because TPHP is a large school, I don't think reopening would be safe," Parker said.

Furthermore, teenagers are hoping for a balance with reopening and restrictions. "The stay-at-home order shouldn't have been lifted, but it's good that small businesses are able to reopen. My mom has a business, and it's been hard because she's has been opening and closing back and forth," Chin said.

Students have noticed multiple reopening and closing orders from Governor Newsom. "There's been a lot of back and forth, maybe because he's getting a lot of pressure from all sides. People need to cooperate with him, but you can't please everybody," Parker said.

However, many students are pleased with the Biden administration's leadership. "Before this administration, it wasn't even required to wear a mask on government property. They also have the weekly press briefings. He sets an example that the pandemic is serious. He's guided by science versus personal political gain," Ashley Hanson, a senior at Torrey Pines High School, said.

Vaccines have become another pandemic talking point. "I was excited to get the vaccine. I took it to volunteer at the hospital and to protect myself against COVID, as its long-term impacts are still unknown. I'm feeling more optimistic because of the vaccine distribution," Hanson said.

Many teenagers are comfortable with taking a COVID-19 vaccine. "I'm not concerned about the side effects of the vaccine, because I trust the scientists and know the basic fundamentals of how vaccines work," Chin said.

While teenagers are feeling the length of the pandemic, to them the vaccine represents light at the end of the tunnel. ■

GORILLAS CONQUER COVID

Julie Maxey-Allison | 10th Street

Hair style and mask courtesy
Julie Maxey-Allison



Good news: Winston, the 49-year old western lowland gorilla who tested positive for COVID-19 at the San Diego Safari Park on January 11, 2021, is doing well. This silverback breeding male, the leader of his troop of eight who also tested positive, got “monoclonal antibody therapy” similar to the treatment given to some people.

Monoclonal antibodies are a lab-made version of the body’s natural infection-fighting proteins and Winston’s vaccine was from a synthetic supply not permitted for human use. The antibodies may have contributed to his ability to overcome the virus according to Zoo veterinarians.

Winston’s and the troop’s diagnosis was the first known case of natural transmission of the virus to great apes. How? The supposition is that an asymptomatic staff member may have transmitted the disease even though wearing personal protective gear. Winston and the troop remain under observation as they recover from symptoms including mild coughing, congestion, runny noses, and low energy. The report is the group is eating, drinking, and interacting well. As to the other animals at the San Diego Zoo and Safari Park, veterinarians routinely vaccinate wildlife against a range of diseases and currently candidates are being identified for treatment with the Zoo’s limited supply of synthetic monoclonal antibodies.

In the wild in Africa’s Congo Basin and surrounding countries these critically endangered gorillas live as peaceful herbivores—except when threatened. When called to protect the troop, the dominant male stands up on two legs, slaps his chest, and roars to intimidate enemies. Think King Kong. Their average lifespan is 35 years but their population is dwindling, as are many animals, due to poaching and disease. With human care they, with Winston as an example, can live into their 50s. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is most certainly a wake-up call reminding us of our interrelationship with nature and animals and our need to protect all.

You can do your little bit to help. Simply recycle your old cellphone at the Zoo or the Park. Why? Cellphones are made with coltan, an ore that is mined in central Africa. To unearth the ore, illegal miners invade gorilla habitat including protected parks. For food, they hunt for and eat wild gorillas. Your recycling helps reduce the demand for coltan, thus fewer invasive miners kill gorillas and fewer phone parts and batteries clutter landfills. ■



Del Mar Community Connections
Supporting and Serving Seniors

MARCH 2021

Ashley Simpkins, Program Director

The Path of Purposeful Aging

In your quiet moments, have you ever wondered about your purpose, your reason for being? If that question seems too weighty or “out there,” how about your reason for getting up in the morning? That’s pretty straightforward. Your answer to that question is your purpose.

Purpose is fundamental. It is universal. Indeed, it’s the key to health, healing, happiness and longevity.

The DMCC Health and Wellness Premiere Speaker Series will welcome guest speaker Dr. Richard Leider on April 6, 2021 at 3pm, for a remote program in which he will provide participants with clear evidence, insight and practical tools for purposeful aging.

Richard Leider is an internationally bestselling author, coach, and keynote speaker who has pioneered the way we answer the question of purpose. Widely viewed as a pioneer of the global purpose movement, his work is featured regularly in many media sources including PBS public television and NPR public radio. His PBS Special – The Power of Purpose – was viewed by millions of people across the U.S. He has taken his purpose message to all 50 states, Canada, and on four continents.

Those interested should visit dmcc.cc/calendar or subscribe to DMCC’s email list for registration details.

COVID Vaccine Access

DMCC encourages all eligible adults to get vaccinated against COVID-19 whenever they qualify. Access to vaccination clinics and events can be challenging for many, because of transportation, ability to use the internet to make the reservation, or a number of other reasons. If you need extra help accessing the vaccine, please give us a call at (858) 792-7565 and DMCC staff and volunteers will be happy to assist with finding solutions. If you are a senior and your kids or grandkids are helping you and finding the process challenging, we invite them to call us, too.

Volunteer of the Month – March

DMCC’s Volunteer of the Month for March 2021 is Lauren Wright, graphic designer extraordinaire, because she’s always there to help create beautiful print items, such as DMCC’s Love Your Heart valentine and Gala invitations. Thank you, Lauren!

DMCC programs and services depend on our incredible volunteers! To learn more about Lauren or other DMCC volunteer opportunities, visit dmcc.cc/volunteerofthemonth.

For more information... or to join our email list:

Please visit our website at dmcc.cc or contact the DMCC office at (858) 792-7565 or dmcc@dmcc.cc. ■

VACCINES YES/NO ?

Don Mosier, MD, PhD

GOOD NEWS

A COVID-19 vaccine site, the North County Coastal Vaccination Super Station, opened on Friday, Feb. 12 at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. The site is open for both drive-thru and pedestrian vaccination. The vaccine administration is handled by Scripps Health personnel in coordination with the county health department. Appointments are available on the county's vaccination website at www.vaccinationsuperstationsd.com. Kudos to newly elected County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer for her key role in locating this vaccine site in Del Mar. This will be a convenient site for all Del Mar residents to get vaccinated as the eligibility criteria expand and more vaccine doses are available. The sooner the better as more transmissible coronavirus variants are spreading, and vaccination will stop the spread if most of us get the vaccine.

BAD NEWS

We don't know how many Del Mar residents have concerns that might prevent them from getting the COVID-19 vaccine, but we do know that 1/3 of Americans say they will not take the vaccine (reported in Los Angeles Times Feb. 11th edition). Concerns raised by those unwilling to be vaccinated are lack of efficacy, concern about side effects, distrust of government mandates, and dismissal that COVID-19 is a serious threat to them. Let's address the concerns in order:

- 1. Lack of efficacy** – Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines protected 95% of trial participants from COVID-19 disease and death. These are outstanding results compared to other vaccines, as confirmed by Dr. Anthony Fauci, a trusted expert on this topic.
- 2. Side effects** – Both vaccines require 2 doses. Side effects were minimal after the first dose, and only slightly greater after the second dose. Common side effects were local muscle soreness, a low grade fever, fatigue, and headache. These symptoms resolved in 2-3 days. Allergic responses have occurred in individuals with a history of severe allergies, but they are exceedingly rare. Nonetheless, each vaccine site has allergy medication at the ready in case of any allergy symptoms. Over 5 million Californians have been vaccinated as of Feb. 12th, and no severe side effects have been observed.
- 3. Distrust of government mandates** – 44% of Black Californians say they will not get vaccinated. Many cite mistrust of medical authorities because they have historically suffered mistreatment at their hands. The 42% of Republicans who say they will not get the vaccine are more likely to watch Fox News than the general public. Anti-vaxxers are more common among affluent white citizens.
- 4. COVID-19 is “not a threat” (500,000 deaths)** →



*Barley Gaylord celebrating Valentine's Day.
Courtesy Lynn Gaylord and the DMF.*

Vaccine shortages have led to postponement of second shots for many Del Mar seniors.

How concerned should you be? The timing of the second dose is 3 weeks after the 1st dose for the Pfizer vaccine and 4 weeks later for the Moderna vaccine. This timing is based on the vaccine trial studies and not what we know about the human immune response. If you get the second shot 4-8 weeks after the first shot, you still will get a substantial boost to your immune response and achieve 95% disease protection. The first dose alone gives 50% or more protection against disease, which is as good as the annual flu shot. More vaccine is coming, so be patient and get that second shot when it is available.

say it is) – Younger Americans who have not had a family member or friend die from COVID tend to dismiss the seriousness of the disease. While older citizens are at highest risk for death, 35 San Diego County residents younger than 40 have died from COVID-19 since the pandemic began. Younger citizens are also more influenced by social media and the internet, both of which are rife with vaccine misinformation.

The current estimate is that 80% of us need to get vaccinated to achieve “herd immunity” (the point at which virus transmission cannot be sustained because each exposure has only a 20% chance of resulting in infection) and bring an end to this pandemic. That means that we need to convince the majority of the vaccine skeptics that it is in their interest to get vaccinated. It certainly is in our interest. ■

DRINK UP

Danica Edelbrock, M.S.

Winter months bring about cool, dry weather. By the time we feel thirsty we are already partially dehydrated. Please remember to drink frequently. A good “estimate” is half of your body weight in ounces. So, if you are 160lbs an ideal starting point for your daily water intake would equal roughly 80 ounces (8-10 glasses).

Here is a list of reminders as to why it is SO important to stay hydrated. Dehydration may

1. Cause bad breath
2. Cause cravings for sugar
3. Wreck a workout
4. Dry out skin
5. Cause hypersensitivity
6. Cause exhaustion
7. Cause shivering, dizziness, muscles cramps, or blurred vision
8. Cause headaches and constipation

A quick way to test your hydration is with your urine color. The darker it is, the more dehydrated you are. Urine color may be affected by medications, supplements or medical conditions so please only use this as a basic guide!

How hydrated are you?



Source: <https://resolveok.com/2019/05/28/heatstress/hydration/>

Danica Edelbrock, M.S. is an Exercise Physiologist with over 20 years experience developing specialized exercise programs. □

IS RECYCLING IMPORTANT?

Amélie Roy (10 years old)



Recycling is an important solution for addressing environmental problems, but not everyone knows why. I think recycling is important for our environment because without our planet Earth, we would not be able to live. Global warming is bad for the ocean as well as the earth. If your trash ends up in the sea, it puts animals and plants in danger! Recycling is useful because you reuse your trash. This is why recycling is important for our environment.

Every few days, our planet's surface gets bit by bit warmer. This is called global warming. Every year, the sea rises about 3.6 mm (Climate.gov). Toxins and plastic gases are causing the icebergs in the Arctic and Antarctica oceans to melt because they are warming up the air. As the sea takes over land, all the cute animals like pandas and polar bears are going to die or lose their homes because of not recycling (including plants). This is why recycling is important to prevent global warming.

If you do not recycle, your trash sometimes ends up in the sea causing marine life to have risks of extinction (Readworks). Seagulls and other birds eat plastic and human-made creations which are bad for them. Some plastics are very dangerous and harmful. When you are swimming, or bathing in the sea, your own body gets exposed to these products. This is why not recycling is threatening for marine life and not good for people.

Recycling is useful because you reuse your own trash. The Trash-o-saurus is a 2000-pound dinosaur that was made from trash including false teeth, license plates and tires from the former Garbage Museum, Connecticut. This trash dinosaur explains that you can reuse, mold, or sculpt your waste for new purposes, such as for art, architecture, tools... You can also melt your bottles or use biodegradable plastic. Another solution is to not use plastic!

Suddenly we realize that recycling is vital for our planet. Icebergs are melting because of global warming. Trash is ending up into the ocean causing marine life to die! Reusing our waste is giving it a new life. If we don't act fast, planet earth is going to be at stake, so let's keep recycling! □

EN FUEGO OLÉ!

Julie Maxey-Allison | 10th Street

In business since July 1995, En Fuego is still going, maybe not strong, but is open for customers after struggling through the year of the 2020-21 pandemic that has, of course, challenged many businesses.

“With restaurants, it has been a ‘roller coaster’ ride contending with confusing state and county mandates to open, to close, to serve in house, to offer only takeout, to close, to open with 25% capacity, and on and on,” reports owner John Wingate. He has managed many changes and had to cut his pre-pandemic staff of 48 staff down to 24. Happily, his chef Sergio Beltran and cooks have been available to come in as needed to work. The Del Mar Village Association’s (DMVA) “Fuel The Front Line” campaign was a pivot point for the restaurant. “The DMVA hired Del Mar restaurants—and us—to provide the fuel,” says John who, at a crucial down time, was asked to cook meals for 50 essential workers at Scripps Green Hospital, then another 100 at Scripps in La Jolla. John: “I called Sergio and we learned how to prepare food for takeout and delivery—new to us. That was a great help. We got going. We went from being closed to providing takeout meals—and, we offered margaritas because our bars were closed.”

En Fuego follows the mandates on when to open and close depending on the rise and fall of the local COVID-19 number count. John: “We closed at Christmas after the Thanksgiving swell of COVID cases and on and off throughout the last many months.” Now open, the tables at En Fuego are spaced 6 feet apart and all protocols of cleanliness are observed, the bar spaces are closed. The restaurant is periodically checked by the County Board of Health team to make sure En Fuego is compliant.

For takeout customers: En Fuego is associated with the M’Porte Exchange Program (MEP), a service that encourages customers to opt for reusable containers for “zero waste” takeout orders in place of the single use containers used to transport takeout food. For your first reusable container, order directly from mporteco.com, (“emporter” is French for “to take with you”) or ask a participating restaurant for your takeout meal to be served in a M’porte Zero-Waste Takeout container. The one-time \$25 cost of the container will added to your bill.

For your next takeout order ask for the M’Porte container and bring in your rinsed original. It will then be sanitized and reused by the restaurant. Repeat. ▣



En Fuego Staff. Photo Julie Maxey-Allison.



En Fuego Open. Photo Julie Maxey-Allison.



Arthur, from En Fuego, handing my Zero Waste Takeout order in the M’Porte containers. Photo Valérie Dufort-Roy

TAKEOUT SOLUTION: M'PORTE

Valérie Dufort-Roy | Klish Way

Disposable water bottles are a thing of the past. Many of us now own an array of reusable bottles, some insulated, in metal, glass, with built-in straws or spouts, for coffee, water, for the car or the hike, etc. For an obscure reason, we still find it acceptable to pile up plastic and Styrofoam containers for our takeout meals, knowing that most of them end up in the landfill after a single use. This leads to the well documented equation: landfill = methane emissions = global warming.

The sight of his takeout dinner hidden by a pile of plastic containers is what inspired Brian Macdonald to start M'Porte: a zero-waste takeout solution. It is a container exchange program that allows participating restaurants to serve takeout meals in sturdy, leakproof metal lunchboxes, that customers trade at any participating restaurant for their next takeout meal.

With the help of Jen Grove, from the Del Mar Village Association, Brian has reached out to several restaurants that are jumping into this earth-saving solution! Knowing that “compostable” containers are usually not composted, and recyclable not recycled, En Fuego, Viewpoint, Americana, Beeside Balcony, and Elixir are participating, with new restaurants continuously joining the sustainable takeout experience!

How does it work?

- For the first time, one could order their container directly from mporteco.com, or simply call a participating restaurant and ask for their takeout meal to be served in a M'porte (“emporter” which means “to take with you” in French) Zero-Waste Takeout container.
- The one-time \$25 cost of the container is added to your bill.
- Once you are done enjoying the meal, simply rinse the container, until you plan on a takeout dinner again!
- When ordering takeout from a participating restaurant again, mention that you will be trading a M'Porte container, and request to place your takeout order into a sanitized M'Porte container.
- Et voilà! You have successfully saved a container. You are part of the solution!
- Extra points for scanning the QR code of the M'Porte program on a sign near the cashier, which helps the program track how many times the containers are traded around town!

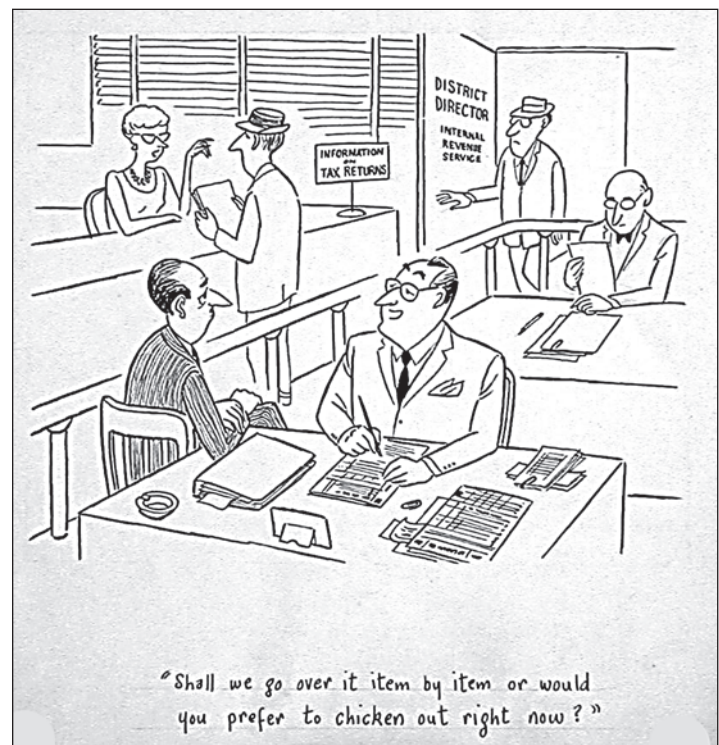
While the pandemic has slowed down the implementation, more and more restaurants are joining, just like En Fuego, because of the endless possibilities of reusable takeout containers. What is next for M'Porte? Brian plans on increasing container versatility towards welcoming →

TAX TIME LOOMS

Recycled cartoons by John Dempsey



ED note: The above cartoon appeared in the very first issue of the Del Mar Sandpiper in April 1997.



more types of food. His ultimate goal: becoming the most effective reusable takeout container provider at reducing waste in the US. Who is in? □

SPROUTS TO SHARE

Julie Maxey-Allison | 10th Street

Anna Sohn, a junior at Francis Parker School on a hybrid schedule, is using her days between in-school time to work on her virtual classes and to fulfill her community service requirement, complicated during the pandemic: she and her school friends plotted out and planted a vegetable garden to be shared.

Anna and friends built individual planting beds 6 feet apart to be easily socially distanced to work on with a donation from her parents for the urban garden essentials, wood, soil, sprouts and a little land grant on Crest Road from her grandparents. Each planted bed is filled with a variety of vegetables including broccoli, kale, lettuces, cabbage, Swiss chard, interspersed with colorful flowers. When ready, the produce will be distributed to seniors at the Bayside Community Center, an area close to the school that lacks grocery stores selling fresh produce. ■



Anna Sohn with vegetables she and some school friends produced: broccoli, kale, lettuces, cabbage, Swiss chard. Two bottom photos courtesy Anna Sohn. Others by Julie Maxey-Allison.

MASK MODELING

Photos Bill Morris



Marisa



Roxy



Lisa



Bill

TIMING OF THE ZONING REFERENDUM City Council Vote Feb. 22nd Meeting

The City Council met on Feb. 22nd to consider the timing of the referendum election challenging the zoning decision of 20 units/acre for the North Commercial area. That decision was delayed by the 3 councilmembers considering the issue (Martinez and Quirk had recused themselves because they live too close to the area) due to a verbal report from Mayor Gaasterland.

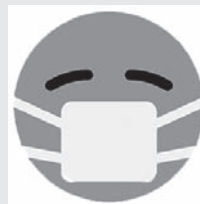
She said that conversations with referendum proponent Arnold Wiesel had suggested that the referendum might be withdrawn if the city took a series of actions. The legality and the feasibility of the actions will be reviewed and reported to council on or before March 15th, providing a guide for further negotiations.

See article on page 12 for context.



Cassie (Cassiopeia)

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Affordable Housing Shifts

Jill Gartman | Pine Needles Drive

State regional housing authorities have required Del Mar to identify an alternative location for multi-unit housing development, now that the City's previously-selected location (North Commercial, Jimmy Durante Blvd by the roundabout) has been taken off the table by a North Hillside resident filing a referendum that will require an eventual vote by all of Del Mar. According to City staff, only two unchallenged places are left that meet State law: four parcels on the North Bluff, and three parcels on the South Bluff on Stratford Court.

After Council-members Martinez and Quirk were disqualified from voting due to conflicts of interest, the decision was left to Mayor Gaasterland and Councilmembers Druker and Worden, all of whom expressed unease at the two remaining options. Gaasterland and Druker preferred North Bluff, with Worden alone proposing a split between North and South Bluff. In this situation, a unanimous vote was required for a council "majority" of three, so North Bluff became the choice with 111-139 housing units on the four parcels.

For citizens interested in preserving North Bluff and South Bluff and its existing low density residential housing, three things must now happen. **First**, the referendum must be withdrawn or voters must reject the citizen referendum when it comes up for a vote, **Second**, the Council must adopt the Community Plan amendment allowing residential use in North Commercial (including Watermark). **Third**, the Del Mar Fairgrounds and the City of Del Mar must reach an agreement for 54 affordable housing units by sometime in 2024.

In addition, the window of opportunity to get Del Mar into compliance on its 5th Cycle Housing Element →



Four North Bluff parcels designated as potential affordable housing locations. Source: City of Del Mar presentation at the Tuesday, February 16 Council meeting

without penalty further narrowed as the city council (except Worden) declined city staff recommendations to pass necessary resolutions and ordinances for the North Commercial zone. Gaasterland instead put forth a motion to direct staff to work on additional design standards for the Housing Element Implementation (HEI) Overlay Zone that the Planning Commission unanimously approved in January to help bring the city into compliance on its housing element. City staff and Worden both expressed concern over the last-minute timing of implementation of additional design standards that would usually require thoughtful vetting by the community at large, including proper noticing, but Gaasterland herself said she is committed to work as hard as needed in the short time window to get new design standards finalized in time to meet the April 15 deadline for bringing the 5th cycle into compliance. ■

Ed note: See update on Feb. 22 Council vote top of page 11.