

Ladera Rancho Times &
LADERA TIMES

News Monthly

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January 2015

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER



Fellow Laderians,

After watching the video numerous times, there's no doubt in my mind that New York City police officer Daniel Pantaleo committed murder when he use an illegal choke hold on Eric Garner. The president of the NYPD Union says because he was obese and asthmatic that Garner contributed to his own death and that he shouldn't have resisted arrest. But there's nothing on the videotape that indicates he was "resisting arrest," which, like "disorderly conduct," is the verbal equivalent of a "throw-down gun" that corrupt cops use to cover their crimes.

When Mr. Garner left his home that morning, he certainly didn't expect to be murdered by a police officer for such a petty offense as selling untaxed cigarettes. He should have been given a summons, like a parking ticket, to answer the charge in court . . . not a death sentence administered by judge, jury, and executioner Daniel Pantaleo, all out in public view in just a few minutes.

Officer Pantaleo has had numerous complaints and lawsuits filed against him, all of which have been settled in favor of the plaintiffs (some are still pending). He has been charged with such offenses as "using excessive force" – a/k/a "police brutality" – false arrests, and degrading public strip searches, all involving minorities. While Mr. Garner was lying on the ground dying, Officer Pantaleo was not rendering urgent care to revive him. Instead, he was on his cell phone calling his union rep.

Not too many years ago before everyone was armed with a near-broadcast-quality video camera with their smart phone, we gave police officers a wide berth when it came to charges of criminal or abusive behavior. Now what we are seeing is slowly awakening the public's eye to what's really going on by rogue cops in our communities.

Now I have to add the caveat that everyone professes: *I do believe the overwhelming majority of police officers in this country – including Orange County – are honest, law abiding citizens in genuine service to the people they pledged to serve and protect.* Leadership, training, and holding officers to an extremely high standard are key. Orange County Sheriff Sandra Huchins has done an exemplary job cleaning up a corrupt department handed to her by former-Sheriff Michael Carona, who actually went to jail for his crimes.

That said, why have we never seen a division of police officers parading against the criminal rogue cops in their organizations. Is that thin Blue Line more important to protect than the lives of the citizens they serve? Or are they, themselves, afraid of what the criminal element among their ranks could do to them for being "disloyal."

I'd like to believe honest, law-abiding police officers would want this low-life criminal scum out of their ranks. Instead of whining about how they're the scapegoats, they could show solidarity – and courage – by marching with the citizens they pledged to protect! That'll go a long way toward improving relations with the public!

About the Cover – The beautiful baby ushering in the New Year is my grandson Evan Scholze, one of two baby boys born into our family in recent months.

Jim Schmitt, Editor and Publisher

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,
 As I glanced over the December Ladera Times with its cheerful cover of Santa and the words "Happy Holidays," I did a double-take when I noticed on the first page a photo of a smiling woman holding a sign "No Panhandling in Ladera Ranch."
 After having read the letter, I found myself both disturbed and saddened. For one, the last thing I would expect to read about in a local paper in an affluent community such as Ladera Ranch during the holiday season is an article

stating basically "How to get rid of people begging for money in our neighborhood." Is this not the season of reaching out to others, the season of giving? Isn't this the time of year to uphold the timeless message of "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All?"
 I am by no means saying that everyone needs to give money out to someone panhandling in the neighborhood. But let's be real, with the exception of a few, most people asking for money have hit rock bottom and have no other resources.
 What a terrible situation

to be in and how humbling to be on the streets.
 Social services and shelters are not readily available or even in existence in many communities. According to the National Coalition for the Homelessness, the number of homeless people greatly exceeds the number of emergency shelter and transitional housing spaces.
 Shelters are often filled to capacity and people are turned away. Even those with a roof over their head may be in dire straits.
 In 2012, 46.5 million Americans were living in poverty. Of these, 3.9 million households often could not provide adequate amounts of food to their

families.
 So instead of focusing on the problem, let's be part of the solution.
 Volunteer at a shelter, donate money to social services, or simply show compassion for your fellow human being.
 There are so many ways to give this season, the season of love and like Mother Teresa once said, "Love is not patronizing and charity isn't about pity, it is about love.
 Charity and love are the same – with charity you give love, so don't just give money but reach out your hand instead."
 Cindy Hodges
 Ladera Ranch

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 Richard A., Laguna Niguel, CA

*Laura's House in Ladera Ranch provide a multitude of programs and services for battered women and children.





A Gingerbread Holiday at Avoux Studio

By Amy R. Spurgeon-Hoffman

Debbie Avoux, local artisan to the stars, celebrated the one-year anniversary of her Ladera-based art studio “Debbie Avoux” in December – primarily hosting weekly children’s canvas paint classes – and by winning the LARCS annual Neighborhood & Home Holiday Decorating Contest!

The longtime Ladera resident – shown above with her children, Reed (left), 9 ½, and Brielle, 7, – opened her studio doors in late 2013 in the Bannister Street Business District off Eton Place.

She offers extracurricular activity with her

professional one-hour paint sessions for children and adults of all ages.

To mark the holiday season, she began sketching her vision of a winter wonderland back in August – detailing measurements, researching supplies and perfectly hand-painting a life-size canvas gingerbread house cover for her studio, complete with giant size lollipops, candy canes. Simply put, every-child’s dream of what they would want their home to look like during the holiday season!

“I see the kids walking by and they get so excited,” smiled Debbie. “There’s a 3-year old boy that walks by

daily and he just squeals in delight!”

Debbie took the opportunity to make the massive home transformation a family affair!

“I helped judge the house as she decorated it!” smiled Reed. “Some parts I said to change, but mostly I said, “That is *sooo* good!!!”

Already planning additions for the newly minted Ladera must-see home for the 2015 holidays, Debbie envisions more lights, more candy canes and other gingerbread-themed decorations.

She was so busy creating this visual masterpiece for Ladera, that her own

holiday preparations remained on hold.

“I just got the tree last week!” she laughed, just days before Christmas.

Debbie is proof that Laderians can follow their dreams and teach their children that practice makes perfect.

Both Reed and Brielle are so proud of their Mom, who they lovingly and kindly share each week with all the children in Ladera lucky enough to be in “Ms. Debbie’s” paint class. For more info, contact her at debbieavoux@yahoo.com, phone: (949) 283-8407, website: www.debbieavoux.com.

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Looking Ahead to 2015

After being overwhelmingly elected November 4 by South County voters as your new 5th District Supervisor, I was honored to be sworn-in Tuesday, December 2, before an overflow audience of supporters at a Special Meeting of the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

Administering the Oath of Office was my dear friend and mentor, the Honorable Marian Bergeson – former State Senator, Secretary of Education, and 5th District Supervisor.

I was pleased to take office a month early to fill the unexpired term of Supervisor Patricia Bates, who

was chosen by voters in the same election to represent the 36th Senate District.

During my campaign for Supervisor, as I traveled across the 5th District, making my case to residents and humbly asking for their vote, I reflected on the County’s mission statement, which is:

“Making Orange County a safe, healthy, and fulfilling place to live, work, and play, today and for generations to come, by providing outstanding, cost-effective regional public services.”

As I join a new Board of Supervisors that will lead the County in the coming

years, it is important to reflect on this mission and these values.

I am enthusiastic to begin this journey and look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors to continue making Orange County an efficient, fiscally responsible, and safe place to live, work, and travel.

I am also pleased to report that this week, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution to Approve the Orange County Traffic Committee Report.

This will establish an intersection control at the intersection of Narrow Canyon Road and Aura Lane in Ladera Ranch.

I would like to thank OC Public Works, the com-

munity of Ladera Ranch, and Goddard Elementary for working collaboratively and achieving this positive outcome.

Now that the long race is over, I will continue to focus my attention to representing the people of 5th District.

You have my solemn commitment to continue to strive to achieve the most positive and productive results possible for the residents I serve, much as I did as the former Mayor of the City of Dana Point.

Needless to say, I have extremely big shoes to fill after the well respected and passionate public servants who held this seat before me, including former Supervisors Tom Riley, Marian Bergeson, Tom Wilson, and Patricia Bates, who now represents us in the State Senate.

Senator Bates and those before her worked diligently to leave the 5th District better than when they began representing it; and I will endeavor each and every day to do the same.

I am privileged and humbled to represent the Fabulous 5th District and hope you will join me and my Board colleagues in working to make Orange County, America’s 6th largest county, a place all of us can be truly proud of!

I would also like to wish you a safe, happy, and wonderful Holiday Season!

Please don’t hesitate to contact me at (714) 834-3550 or Lisa.Bartlett@ocgov.com if I can ever be of assistance.

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Issue	News and Advertising Deadline	Date Delivered
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March 2015	Wednesday, February 18	Thursday, February 26
April 2015	Wednesday, March 25	Thursday, April 2

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Toy Town Is Back!

by Amy Spurgeon-Hoffman

Toy Town, the toy retailer – a little bit Broadway and a little bit “The Little Engine That Could” – that graced our community since 2004 can now be found online at www.mkt.com/toytown.

Bookmark it now before you forget!

Laderians tried but couldn't save their beloved toy store almost a year ago when store owners Josh and Irene Vecchione reluctantly announced the store would be closing its doors in Mercantile West after many attempts to remain open.

Josh and Irene, also founders of the only performing arts theatre group

here – Ladera Performing ARTS (LPA) – used the back half of the Mercantile West toy store as a “theatre” for LPA children aged four thru 18.

The closing of the physical location didn't just break the hearts of locals used to shopping there for toys, or just stopping in to say hello to Josh or Irene, but displaced hundreds of theatre based children.

Luckily, the Vecchiones stayed in Ladera by continuing to hold LPA production rehearsals at Chaparral and Oso Grande Elementary schools.

LPA not only hosts a number of classes, workshops and camps for

theatrically based children, but puts on detailed and highly professional productions at Tesoro High School twice a year.

Visit

www.laderaperformingarts.org

to find out more.

Laderians can now shop online at Toy Town and continue to support the Vecchiones' vision for Ladera's children by not only providing high-quality, discounted and classic toys, but help raise much needed funds for our budget strapped public schools and LPA since 20% of all Toy Town profits go back to Ladera schools or organization of your choice.



“Ten-years of building our family business didn't just close down when we shut the doors for the last time,” the uber-optimistic Josh said. “When one door closes, another one opens. And I get to wear my Toy Town logo shirts again! I have 37 of them!” Josh said.

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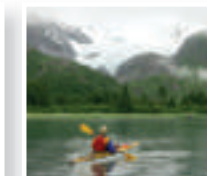
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One long-time customer said, "A few years ago I took my first hot yoga class at MELT and loved every minute of it, especially the heat, which surprised me.



Afterwards, I felt like I had worked out, taken a nap, and mediated all at the same time.

"Even though I could not touch my toes, I felt welcomed and comfortable. The teacher gave different levels of each pose geared

for beginners all the way up to advanced yogis.

"There were also other beginners in the room and plenty of different body types. I expected everyone to be 90 pounds with toned arms and stomachs. This definitely wasn't the case

– there were all shapes and sizes, including about 1/3 men.

"After my first class I was hooked. I even cancelled my gym membership that I have had since I was 12 years old. You do not need to be a contortionist or someone who has been doing yoga for years."

Visit MELT Ladera Hot Yoga to give hot yoga a try. Check online at www.meltladerahotyoga.com or see their special ad on page 10 of this issue of the Ladera Times for their best introductory offers. They even have warm, kids, and *free* classes!

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I'm Grateful to Serve – Kristin Vellandi

In November, Kristin Vellandi was elected President of the Board of the Ladera Ranch Maintenance Corporation (LARMAC). We sat down with Kristin to talk about her new role, her goals for our community and what makes living in Ladera Ranch so special for her and her family.

LT: Congratulations Kristin on being elected President of the LARMAC Board. Tell us a little about yourself and the Vellandi Family.

My husband, Alex, and I moved to Ladera Ranch from Irvine in 2004 and purchased our home in Oak Knoll in 2006. We have three children – an eighth grade daughter, Racquelle, who is busy with refereeing for AYSO soccer, playing soccer with ESL, horses, and her own charity, Treats for Charity; fifth-grader Jacqueline, who does everything creative and recently starred as Tiny Tim in South Coast Repertory's A Christmas Carol; and Carlo, our third-grade son, who is all sports all the time, including AYSO soccer, Ladera Little League and recently Ladera's National Junior Basketball.

As a family, giving back is very important to us so we're very involved in several organizations including our children's school, Scout Troops, Orange Coast College's Horticultural Program, Canine Angels and, of course, LARMAC here in Ladera Ranch.

Professionally, I've worked in strategic communications and public affairs most of my career – either for corporations or candidates looking to build

support and convey a winning message.

LT: What do you value most about living in this Ladera Ranch?

We were drawn to Ladera Ranch because of its sense of community. We couldn't believe the neighborhood gatherings and the friendly, caring people who call Ladera Ranch home. Its amenities are second to none, and its landscaping is beautiful. Ladera Ranch is a special place and a wonderful place to raise a family.

LT: What made you decide to run for the LARMAC Board?

It's about giving back to the community my family calls home and wanting to make Ladera Ranch the best it can be for all our families. I campaigned on three things: fair allocation of facilities, maintaining amenities without increasing dues, and identifying parking solutions. This is my third year of a three-year term.

LT: What's the Report Card on these issues?

I believe LARMAC has made great progress in all three areas: I'm looking forward to additional changes at the upper Cox Sports Field parking lot to ease parking and sports drop-offs; I'm pleased with the new efforts to enhance the landscape along Crown Valley Parkway and with updates at the Clubhouses, and will continue to support only neutral budgets as LARMAC remains in very good shape. BTW, we have put more Ladera Ranch kids on our sports' fields this Fall than ever before.



Kristin Vellandi

LT: As the new LARMAC President, what are your key goals?

I intend to protect this HOA's strong financial position by working with Board Members on vendor contracts and relationships to make sure Ladera Ranch is getting the most bang for its buck.

I also look forward to building on our Neighborhood Representative system. Nearly half of our neighborhoods in Ladera don't have a current Neighborhood Rep – that role is so important for LARMAC to help get information out to residents, run elections and serve our membership in general.

LT: Do you feel residents understand the role and responsibilities of the LARMAC Board?

It can be challenging in an unincorporated community to realize that LARMAC is simply the local HOA. Our role is to maintain LARMAC's facilities and amenities so as to protect and enhance the value of each homeowner's prop-

erty. As a Board, we take this responsibility very seriously.

I'm glad LARCS exists as a community services arm for Ladera Ranch, and the Civic Council serves a role in interfacing with County government on behalf of our residents.

LT: You recently launched HOA Happenings; tell us what that is?

I want the Community to know what we are doing and why. I started HOA Happenings as a monthly newsletter to highlight latest projects, volunteer opportunities and provide general homeowner education. LARMAC is also doing a better job using the community website, LaderaLife.com, to get out information.

I encourage residents to take time to visit the HOA section there. And, and of course, we'll continue to keep residents informed through the Ladera Times!

LT: As the first woman elected LARMAC Board President, do you feel you bring a different perspective?

It's sort of fascinating to me that in a dynamic community like Ladera Ranch, I'm the first woman elected to the LARMAC Board. (*Editor's Note: In early days, the Developer required a seat on the Board. This was held by a woman, but it was not an elected seat.*)

There's no question men and women have different perspectives. I do believe I am more open and willing to communicate more thoroughly on issues. This has resulted in more information going out to the community on a regular

basis.

I also think women busy with careers and family demands can better appreciate some of the little daily hassles we've addressed such as making homeowner entry to the Big Bucket Waterpark and sports fields easier. I'm proud this LARMAC Board came up with those solutions.

LT: What skills do you look for in a LARMAC Board member?

It's important to have diversity; Ladera Ranch is a broad and deep community and I value different opinions.

I'm very excited about this current Board. Newly elected members are Marc Miles, who has an important background as a litigator, and Joe Riboto, a former military man and grandfather with grandchildren living in Ladera.



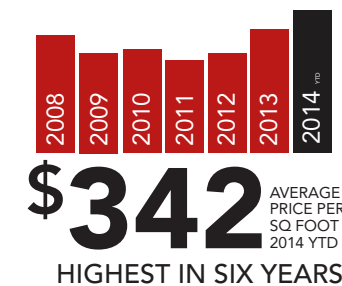
Vellandi Family – Front l-r are Racquelle, Carlo, and Jacqueline; in the back are former LARMAC President Alex, and current LARMAC President Kristen.

As a communications person, it's critically important to me that this Board, our staff, and everyone involved with LARMAC, share information and promote total transparency. We are not a body of secrets, rather a volunteer Board doing our utmost to serve the Ladera Ranch membership.

LT: If you could ask one thing of Ladera Ranch residents, what would it be?

That residents be willing to reach out, get involved and truly listen. Every person on this Board and on our various committees is there because they love Ladera Ranch and want to do their part to protect why they bought here in the first place.

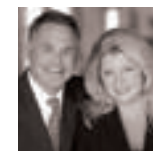
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Stats from a report generated on 3/20/14. Based on annualized average price per square foot for single family homes and condominiums sold in Orange County, CA. All reports presented are based on data supplied by the CARETS (CLAW, CRISNet MLS, DAMLS, CRMLS, i-Tech MLS, and/or VCRDS) or their MLSs. Neither the Associations nor their MLSs guarantee or are in anyway responsible for their accuracy. Data maintained by the Associations or their MLSs may not reflect all real estate activities in the market. Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed. This is not intended to solicit a listed property. If your property is currently listed for sale with a broker, please disregard. ☎️ 0100

FIRSTTEAM
REAL ESTATE

Supervisors Okay Stop Signs on Narrow Canyon

by Jett McCormick Chairman
Ladera Ranch Civic Council



Jett McCormick

At its December 16 meeting, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved the four way stop at Narrow Canyon and Aura Lane adjacent to the Goddard School Lane, Bluff Top Park, and the Boreal Plunge.

All these facilities generate significant pedestrian traffic at an intersection with limited visibility for drivers and little warning of pedestrians being presents.

This was Lisa Bartlett's first meeting as our new 5th District Supervisor.

She supported the proposed ordinance and spoke to its importance to the community. The Orange County Traffic Committee approved the project at its October 23 meeting.

Many residents and the Civic Council provided letter of support for the project, as did the Ladera Times, which lobbied for this initiative going back several years.

This is a win for the community as this intersection has presented a safety hazard for years. At this time, a schedule for the work is not available but it should be completed in the early months of 2015.

Take the Community Survey!

The LRCC Community Survey will be concluding in January so, if you haven't taken it, don't wait!

The Community Survey is designed to help key decision-makers at the County consider important decisions about the future of Ladera Ranch.

Specifically, the survey will identify areas of focus that the County may use to benefit our community. This may include, for example,

enhanced traffic improvements, police enforcement, fire safety, efforts to help the business community, or providing opportunities for enhanced local services.

The survey will remain open until mid-January to allow residents time to take the survey.

It is important we get good participation to ensure we get a good cross section of the Community to respond so, if you haven't already done so, please take the survey which is available at the Council's website at www.lrciviccouncil.org.

LARCS is also helping to spread the word by including the information in its email blasts and a link on www.laderalife.com.

Make your voice heard by taking the survey.

Civic Council Goals For 2015

The Civic Council adopted goals for 2015 with some being updated from 2014, but

a few new important goals added.

The Council is forming new committee to address the expanding issues the Civic Council addresses. The committees include Public Safety/Traffic, Public Works/Land Use, Community Relations/Communications, and Governance. The Council will be adopting charters for these new committees and seeking members during the first quarter of 2015.

Another important goal is the future governance document which will outline a vision of the future of Ladera Ranch and governance options. This will be based on the LAFCO document that the Civic Council has been working with them on for the past year. The Civic Council will also be looking to engage other community group in discussions about the future of Ladera Ranch and address today's issue. For the full list of Goals, go to the Civic Council's website, www.lrciviccouncil.org.

Next Meeting

The LRCC's next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on January 19 at the Santa Margarita Water District building. Help your Civic Council help you. Your membership will ensure you have a voice in your community's future and keep you informed on community issues.

Join today at www.lrciviccouncil.org. Membership is **FREE**. The Civic Council is over 1,000 members strong and growing.

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The Science Fair introduces STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) concepts early on to help children develop a strong foundation for their future education and a passion for STEAM learning. It is also specially designed to encourage creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking, which are 21st century skills.

The Goddard School focuses on academic, social, creative and physical development to provide a well-rounded experience and ensure children become respectful, confident and joyful learners. Its F.L.EX.® Learning Program (Fun, Learning Experience) is based on accepted research that shows children experience the deepest, most genuine learning when they are having fun. A chess program was recently added to the curriculum to foster the development of critical thinking skills for preschool, pre-k and kindergarten students.

For more information, please visit www.goddardschool.com or call 949-218-6200. The Goddard School located in Ladera Ranch is located at 1 Aura Lane, Ladera Ranch, CA, 92694.



1 Aura Lane, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694

*Offer valid for new Goddard families at the above location only. Some program restrictions apply. Not valid with any other offer. The Goddard Schools are operated by independent franchisees under a license agreement with Goddard Systems, Inc. Programs and ages may vary. Goddard Systems, Inc. program is AdvancED accredited. © Goddard Systems Inc. 2014.



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Team Nikos Dedicates New Basketball Court

Team Nikos Basketball was honored by the community of Ladera Ranch, LARCS and LARMAC late last year as the special guests at the grand opening ceremony of the new Ladera Ranch community basketball court at the Avendale Clubhouse.

The teammates and their coaches Steve Williams and Jameel Mamud were recognized for winning the 4th Grade 2014 AAU National Championship earlier last year in Sacramento, California.

The full sized basketball court, located next to Avendale Clubhouse, is the first and only public court in Ladera Ranch that is not part of a school facility. It was built for community

use. “We at Team Nikos would like to thank LARCS, LARMAC and all of our Ladera Ranch families for blessing us with this opportunity to be recognized, and allowing our talented young athletes to take the first shots on the new community court,” said Coach Steve Williams.

“It’s exciting to see the community honor these boys and their hard work. I know this beautiful new court will see some great pick up basketball games here in Ladera Ranch for years to come.”

To learn more about Team Nikos Basketball and local AAU and NJB youth basketball opportunities for boys and girls go to www.teamnikos.com.



Team Nikos – In the top photo, LARMAC Board Member Abe Cook honors Team Nikos, l-r: Coach Steve Williams, Jake Hesse, Braden Christenson, Coach Jameel Mahmud, Braeden Moore, Donovan Comestro, Michael Chapman, Tanner Mehrens, Isaiah Tolmaire, Easton Cattich. In the photo above are, l-r, back row: Jake Hesse, Tanner Mehrens, and Easton Cattich. Front row, l-r, are: Isaiah Tolmaire, Braeden Moore, Michael Chapman, Donovan Comestro, and Braden Christenson. Not pictured teammates: Kellen Mitchell and Tanner Deal. In the top photop on the opposite page are, l-r: Joe Ribotto, LARMAC Board member; Jay Rogers, LARCS Board President; Steve Williams, Team Nikos President; and Abe Cook, outgoing LARMAC Board President. Photos courtesy of Merrill Christenson.



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The Best Things You Give Yourself

As the holiday season heats up to full force, it is likely your halls are decked, your stockings hung by the chimney with care or perhaps your Hanukkah preparations are all set in stone and running full force.

For a season that lasts just a small portion of the year, it seems we sometimes spend months and an inordinate amount of our incomes in order to capture the memories, feel the spirit and, worst-case scenario, keep up with the neighbors.

While we may be entirely aware of this phenomenon, we nonetheless are often swept away in it. Even with the most satisfying holiday traditions, at the end of them we are regularly worn down and worn out.

It was last year when I came screeching out of the holidays and firmly into the New Year that I finally recognized a pattern that has haunted me for years.

My business had virtually come to a skidding halt from late November through December. This part wasn't a surprise, but when January finally rolled around my plan was to roll up my sleeves and dive full on into the career that brings me so much

joy. I was looking forward to the end of the rich foods and the leisurely days of vacation.

Armed with some killer New Year's resolutions and a box full of P90X wellness, the future looked fit and productive. Without the holiday distractions I imagined spending all of my time and energy in a state of personal wellness.

And January came and well, it went. I had my aggressive plans and rather than rolling up my sleeves, what happened was extended couch time and a full schedule of Netflix watching. I cannot recall what it was I watched.

This was not my first go-round with January and it seems every year I spend the entire month trying to garner back the energy so carelessly thrown about during the holiday season.

As a woman, and a life coach, I know well the demands we put upon ourselves. Unreasonable demands. And because those demands are unreasonable, if we persist in raising the bar every... single... year... we will tap out. Or at least lay on the couch covered in chocolate and shame

throughout the coming month.

As you ride your own personal whirlwind through the holidays of your heritage and choice, I propose caution and self-care. While we all know that more does not mean better and busier does not equal happier, we are each prone to those pitfalls and we become victims of our own, unrelenting expectations.

With just a few simple strategic shifts in how you use your resources, it doesn't have to be this way.

Your holiday guests will enjoy the gift of your company far more than an elaborately decorated home.

Your family will relish the gift of a loving and relaxed wife and mother. Time and energy are your most important resources and guarding them and using them with care benefits family, business and your well being.

Slow down, my friend. Take a deep breath. Spend less, love more and if you do end up on the couch, keep the chocolate and throw out the shame. That's the best gift you could ever give yourself.

(Michelle Patterson is

the CEO of Women Network LLC, a media and production company giving women a voice to share their message. Women Network's "umbrella platform" shines a light on organizations and corporations who empower women and bring them together as a community to experience "We are Better Together." Women Network is creating the largest community of women globally. They are the exclusive event producer of the California Women's Conference. This fortunate relationship allows Women Network to provide additional promotional benefits to the California Women's Conference through its array of web media functions.

She is also the founder of Global Women Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit public charity created to bring women together to create global change by empowering them to transform their communities. Its mission supports women to effectuate this change through serving as a world-wide conduit for connecting community, mentoring, education, and financial support. Mrs. Patterson lives in Ladera Ranch, California with her husband of nearly twenty years, Eric, and their two children, Jaclyn and Chase.)

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Haggen to Acquire Pavilions & Albertson's

Pacific Northwest grocery chain Haggen has entered into an agreement to acquire 146 stores as part of the divestment process brought about by the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) review of the Albertson's and Safeway merger.

The acquisition will include the Pavilion's and Albertson's supermarkets in Ladera Ranch.

With this acquisition, which is subject to FTC approval, Haggen will expand from 18 stores with 16 pharmacies to 164 stores with 106 pharmacies; from 2,000 employees to more than 10,000 employees; and from a Pacific Northwest company with locations in Oregon and Washington to a major regional grocery chain with locations in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada and Arizona.

"With this pivotal acquisition, we will have the opportunity to introduce many more customers to the Haggen experience. Our Pacific Northwest grocery store chain has been committed to local sourcing, investing in the communities we serve, and providing genuine service and home-



made quality since it was founded in 1933," said John Caple, chairman of the Haggen board of directors and partner at Comvest Partners, a private investment firm that owns the majority of shares of Haggen.

"We will continue our focus on sourcing and investing locally even with this exciting expansion."

After the close of the transaction early this year, Haggen will convert all of the acquired Albertson's and Safeway stores to the Haggen banner in phases during the first half of 2015.

All Albertson's LLC and Safeway store employees will have the opportunity

to become employees of Haggen as their individual stores are transitioned to the Haggen banner.

Haggen plans to retain the current store management teams.

"We warmly welcome these new employees and stores into the Haggen family. The stores are well run and very successful, thanks to the dedicated store teams," said John Clougher, Haggen CEO, Pacific Northwest.

"We want to retain these existing teams while allowing our growing company to build on their past successes. We plan to adopt the best practices of our new stores to offer a superior shopping experience for our valued customers in all of our stores."

"We committed to this acquisition because we knew we had the experience, talent and drive to get it done," added Mr. Caple. "The strength of our management and store support

teams, combined with the talent of the store teams at each of the new store locations, will enable Haggen to be a successful West Coast grocer."

Founded in 1933, Haggen is one of the Pacific Northwest's leading grocery chains. The Bellingham, Washington, based company operates stores in Washington and Oregon under the Haggen Northwest Fresh banner.

It is the state's sixth-largest private company with the majority of shares owned by Comvest Partners. Haggen is dedicated to providing its customers with the best of the Northwest.

For more than 80 years, it has supported regional farms, ranches, fisheries and other businesses, creating a lasting and sustainable local food economy.

Haggen is also deeply rooted in the communities it serves, providing support to local events and partnerships.

Laura's House Honors Exceptional Volunteers at Appreciation Event

Laura's House, a non-profit devoted to ending the cycle of domestic violence, recognized nine volunteers for their dedication to the organization at its 2014 Volunteer Appreciation event at the Laura's House Resale Store in San Juan Capistrano.

More than 50 supporters were on hand to honor the standout individuals who worked year-round to support Laura's House initiatives – from its Resale Store, counseling and resource center, emergency shelter, 24-hour crisis hotline, events and more.

Through October 2014,

more than 400 volunteers have provided Laura's House with nearly 9,200 hours of unpaid service – leading into the nonprofit's busiest time for volunteers – and a 6.4 percent increase from 2013. Volunteers served in various critical positions, including administrative, H.E.A.R.T. program advocates, legal services, hotline support, childcare, case management, house coordinator, resale store customer service and product preparation, events, promotions and as board members.

The Laura's House volunteer program is currently in the certification process

through OneOC and Points of Light to become a Service Enterprise in early 2015.

"Our hundreds of volunteers contribute their wealth of knowledge, invaluable resources and unwavering commitment each year," said Margaret Bayston, executive director of Laura's House. "They should be proud of their many contributions to our organization, and we're so grateful to have them as part of our team, especially those whose efforts we recognize today."

Awards were presented to the following:

- Case Manager: Karen Marley, Dana Point'
- House Coordinator: Kalley Hartman, Aliso Viejo
- Fund Development: Natalie Bonhall, Rancho

- Santa Margarita
- Alex and Cyndi Lee, Laguna Niguel
- Ronda Terrell, Ladera Ranch
- Laura Feld, Ladera Ranch
- Kathleen McRivette, Rancho Santa Margarita
- Cheri Starr, Irvine

The evening included a fashion challenge on a purple runway, mingling with Laura's House staff, family and friends and desserts, prizes and awards.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit www.laurashouse.org/volunteer-opportunities.html or contact Melanie Galloway at 949-364-3775 or mgalloway@laurashouse.org.

New Year's Resolution, Life And a Rookie Firefighter . . .

We always to start a recruit fire academy every January. Like a New Year's Resolution, it's traditional.

Before recruits learn basic firefighting skills, the first thing they learn and develop are fire academy "Integrity Agreements."

Actually our Fire Academy Integrity Agreements are like "New Year's Resolutions." We develop and own these agreements while holding ourselves accountable for success.

If you don't live up to the agreements, you have no one to blame but yourself. You own them, custom made by and for you!

The first one is to have respect. Respect for yourself



Fire Chief Sam DiGiovanna

first, and respect for others. If you don't respect yourself, you certainly won't respect others.

Have a positive attitude. If your attitude is negative,

it's certain you won't succeed. Support and help each other. Firefighting is a team effort and so is life. No one

can do it alone, no one!

Don't judge. There's an old saying "when you spot it, you got it." What you dislike in others is likely something that resides within yourself that you don't like. Give grace and learn a little patience for both yourself and others.

Don't gossip. If you have an issue with someone or something, the only one that can do something about it is yourself and the other person. Go to that

person and discuss it with them not others.

If you make a mess, clean it up! If you spilled milk, what do you do, you clean it up or it gets harder to clean the longer you wait.

The same goes when you make a mess with another person. Clean it up and say I'm sorry. Don't wait too long or you'll create lasting damage. Being prideful makes even the best looking appear ugly.

These are a few examples of Integrity Agreements that work for the Recruit Firefighters. Your probably not much different with your New Year's Resolutions.

What are some Integrity Agreements or Resolutions you'll keep in 2015?

Happy New Year, Fire Chief Sam DiGiovanna

Email Your Stories to LaderaTimes@cox.net

Individuals or organizations, such as sports leagues, clubs, non-profits, businesses, etc. with a news story should email it to LaderaTimes@cox.net. The story should answer the questions: "Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How." Photos should be 200 pixels- or dots-per-inch or at least 6" wide. The *Ladera Times* is published the Thursday on or about the first of every month, so stories for that issue should be submitted by the 15th of the prior month.



**CAPISTRANO UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS**
BY RAM MUKHERJI



All schools in the CUSD are on holiday recess opening on January 5, 2015.

Prior to the holiday recess all students were enjoying Holiday events including Holiday Concerts, Father Daughter dance, and so on.

❖ ❖ ❖
The 5th grade Ladera Ranch Elementary School Students had their outdoor Science camp during the first week of December. As usual the students enjoyed

the time away from their homes, away from parents. It is a great experience for our students

❖ ❖ ❖
The Ladera Ranch Middle School students collected donations for about 75 JoyJars for Jessie Rees Foundation, Never Ever Give Up, fight against cancer organization. A very good deed, and it will be remembered by all concerned.

❖ ❖ ❖
During the December

10 CUSD Board meeting one reelected Board Member, Lynn Hutton-Hudson, and two newly elected Board Members, Martha McNicholas and Gila Jones were sworn in. Lynn said that since her children will be out of school by the end of her term, this will her last four years on the Board.

❖ ❖ ❖
As per the State Education code, the Board was reorganized.
Lynn Hutton-Hudson

**Laura's House
Receives Grant
from Bank of
America**

Laura's House, head quartered in Ladera Ranch, has received a \$5,000 grant from Bank of America \$5,000 to support its domestic violence emergency shelter services. "When the people of Orange County have access to affordable housing, jobs, and basic nutrition, Orange County succeeds," said Allen Staff, Orange County market president, Bank of America.

Accepting the check from Eric Chamberlain, Senior Vice President, Bank of America are, Andrea McCallister (left), Director of Development & Communications, Laura's House, and Margaret Bayston, CEO and Executive Director of Laura's House.



was selected as President, Amy Hanacek is the new Vice President, and Martha McNicholas is the Clerk of the Board. Past President John Alpay was presented with a plaque for his past two year's service as President.

❖ ❖ ❖
Ten CUSD seniors were named Scholars in the National Hispanic Recognition Program. San Juan Hills and Tesero each had one student, Kayvon Mahmood Zadeh and Brandon Bannigan. Congratulations guys.

❖ ❖ ❖
On January 15, 2015, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, the Transitional Kindergarten Parent Information night will be held at the Ladera Ranch Elementary School.

❖ ❖ ❖
Beginning Monday, March 2, students in Capistrano Unified School District can apply for School of Choice.

The School of Choice window will close March 27. Applications will not be accepted after that date.

The School of Choice process provides parents with the ability to apply to a school outside of their child's attendance area on a space-available basis.

The list of schools open to School of Choice will be provided in January.

❖ ❖ ❖
Ram Mukherji is a former Trustee of Tri-City L.A. County Unified School District and Past President of Ladera Ranch Maintenance Corporation.

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Monthly Real Estate Report by Cathie Berlin

LADERA RANCH RECENT SALES ACTIVITY - 30 DAYS ENDING DECEMBER 30, 2014*

Address	Beds	Baths	Sq Ft	Date Closed	Days On Market	List Price	Sold Price	Price Per Sq Foot
73 Sansovino	2	3	1200	12/19/14	66	\$367,999	\$365,000	\$304
84 Hinterland	2	3	1250	12/19/14	200	\$384,900	\$375,000	\$300
15 Quartz	3	3	1700	12/18/14	183	\$419,000	\$390,000	\$229
2 Durlston	3	3	1800	12/24/14	210	\$429,900	\$420,000	\$233
29 Harwick	3	3	1350	12/10/14	31	\$429,900	\$425,000	\$315
7 Clifford	2	3	1617	12/18/14	170	\$439,000	\$433,000	\$268
71 Three Vines	3	3	1400	12/8/14	160	\$449,900	\$444,000	\$317
12 Vinca	3	3	1505	12/15/14	64	\$459,000	\$451,500	\$300
10 Livingston	3	3	1650	12/6/14	124	\$529,000	\$505,000	\$306
20 Durlston	3	3	1750	12/2/14	54	\$509,000	\$509,000	\$291
17 Potters Bend	3	3	1550	12/5/14	39	\$535,000	\$525,000	\$339
11 Clifford	3	3	1800	12/2/14	36	\$529,900	\$535,000	\$297
2 Lindenwood Farm	3	3	1600	12/29/14	97	\$549,000	\$550,000	\$344
5 Maple Run Farm	3	3	1750	12/10/14	156	\$560,000	\$555,000	\$317
2 Maybeck	2	3	1837	12/22/14	26	\$630,100	\$567,000	\$309
6 Savannah	3	3	1760	12/18/14	103	\$575,000	\$567,500	\$322
23 Second	3	3	1750	12/17/14	36	\$610,000	\$605,000	\$346
17 Barnstable	4	3	2200	12/12/14	145	\$699,900	\$620,000	\$282
9 Hanceford	3	3	1800	12/12/14	95	\$669,000	\$658,000	\$366
2 Sandy Pond	4	3	2350	12/17/14	221	\$699,995	\$699,995	\$298
5 Buckman	4	3	2300	12/2/14	88	\$715,000	\$700,000	\$304
9 Cerner	4	3	2071	12/24/14	124	\$729,900	\$710,000	\$343
2 Papette	4	3	2500	12/19/14	462	\$750,000	\$731,000	\$292
27 Cerner	4	3	2140	12/3/14	49	\$749,900	\$740,000	\$346
6 Cousteau	4	3	2400	12/9/14	19	\$749,000	\$751,000	\$313
5 Hempstead	4	3	2400	12/17/14	39	\$774,999	\$767,500	\$320
76 Bedstraw	4	3	2800	12/29/14	65	\$814,900	\$806,000	\$288
2 Vinewood	4	3	2900	12/18/14	145	\$874,900	\$870,000	\$300
18 Sutherland	5	3	2850	12/18/14	154	\$899,000	\$875,000	\$307
58 Laurelhurst	4	4	2920	12/30/14	102	\$919,000	\$890,000	\$305
1 David	4	5	3506	12/12/14	56	\$1,199,900	\$1,135,000	\$324
11 Christopher	5	6	4300	12/5/14	35	\$1,425,000	\$1,450,000	\$337
17 Anapamu	4	5	3900	12/22/14	21	\$1,768,000	\$1,690,000	\$433
15 Anapamu	5	5	4245	12/12/14	65	\$1,895,000	\$1,800,000	\$424

*Based on information from the Association of Realtors/Multiple listing as of 12/30/14 and/or other sources. MLS data is deemed reliable but not guaranteed accurate by the MLS. The Broker/Agent providing the information contained herein may or may not have been the listing agent.

Tips 4 Cleaning Up Your Credit Score

by Cathie Berlin,
Real Estate Editor

Your credit score has a huge impact on just about everything you do. Whether you are trying to get an approval for a home loan, credit card or buying a car, it makes sense to work on cleaning up and maintaining a good credit score in 2015. Here's how:

1. Start with getting a copy of your credit report to see your credit score and what is showing on your report. You can order a free copy of your report from www.annualcreditreport.com. You are entitled to one free credit report from each of the three national credit reporting

agencies every 12 months.

☐ Make sure all of your accounts are in good standing, which means you have paid at least the minimum on every account every month.

☐ Make sure there are no inaccuracies. Errors in your credit report could mean you've been a victim of identity theft.

☐ Make sure any negative info – such as late payments, collections, or bankruptcies have fallen off your credit report after the appropriate amount of time.

2. Fix any inaccuracies and outdated information. If you find an error in your credit report, you can file a dispute – either online or by

mail, with the credit agency that reported the error.

Once your dispute is filed, the credit reporting agency will investigate the issue within 30-45 days. The agency will notify you of the outcome after the conclusion of the investigation. Take detailed notes that include the names of the people with whom you speak and the dates of the conversations. Make sure you follow up to confirm the changes have been made to all three credit agencies.

3. Pay your bills on time. Paying down some debt could reflect positively on both your credit report and credit score. If you have any late payments or ac-

counts in collection, create a budget that will help you pay off the debt as soon as possible.

If you are considering selling, now is a great time to list your home.

If you have any questions or would like more info about selling or buying real estate, please feel free to contact me at 949-291-1959, or email me at: cathieberlin@cox.net, or contact any Realtor® of your choosing, including one of the several advertising their services in Ladera Times.

You can also find me on Facebook at: [Ladera Ranch Homes-Cathie Berlin](https://www.facebook.com/LaderaRanchHomes-CathieBerlin).

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Following are highlights from the Orange County Police Blotter. For more, go to LaderaTimes.com.

December 31

9:49 am, first responders rushed to a home when the mother said her 15-month-old son locked himself in the closet, however the child eventually left himself out, Sam Street.

suspects her estranged husband, who is under a restraining order, may have done it, Tisbury Way.

1:05 pm, man is reported circling around the cul-de-sac a couple times, driving slowly and stopped in front of informant's house and started to get out of the vehicle but drove off when he realized someone was in the house, Lewiston Court.

December 29

1:31 pm, woman reported packages stolen from her front porch, Wedgewood Lane.

12:58 pm, a woman is at Wells Fargo in Mercantile East disputing charges on her account for TV repairs.

1:20 pm, woman reports that someone slashed the tires on her vehicle and

7:34 am, man says his neighbors are away on vacation but their front door is open, Franciscan Court.

December 25

9:16 pm, a woman reported a court order violation, Thalia Street.

9:01 pm, a patrol car was called to the parking lot of the Flintridge Clubhouse swimming pool to quiet the occupants of a white pickup truck who were being too loud, Vinyard Drive and Caldwell Lane.

4:34 pm, a man and a woman are reported having untoward relations in a Mercedes sedan in the Mercantile West parking lot.

2:04 pm, a woman called to say that an identity theft report only included her husband but it actually involves both she and her husband, Kent Court.

December 27

10:26 pm, a man says kids are repeatedly ringing his doorbell, Laurelhurst Drive.

1:43 pm, two people, one with a skateboard, were reported screaming at each other, Weldon Heights and Flintridge Avenue.

12:39 am, informant says neighbors at Laurel Terrace Apartments are laughing too loud, 2000 block of Corporate Drive.

12:22 am, informant says he was going through the McDonald's drive-thru and saw a 6' thin white male in a black shirt with an American flag bandana covering his mouth opening the cash register but when the manager was contacted he said the male with the bandana was an employee, Mercantile East.

December 26

1:11 pm, a male and a female with three small children were reported panhandling and loitering in front of the McDonald's, Mercantile East.

10:46 am, a woman reported a child custody violation, Bower Lane.

9:16 am a man has reported a greenish gray Jaguar with extensive front end and axle damage, parked in the Albertson's lot and may be a stolen vehicle, Bridgepark Plaza.

2:35 am, a suspicious 5'10" white or Hispanic male is trying to open car doors, Lone Oak Circle.

December 25

8:39 pm, a man who works for a repo company wants a deputy to standby while he attempts to repossess a vehicle from a resident who has been extremely hostile during a prior attempt, Moonlight Isle.

9:16 am, a man reported his laptop was lost or stolen at John Wayne Airport, Becker Drive.

December 24

9:35 pm, two drunk men are in a physical altercation in the street, Martino.



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LADERA TIMES

The **Ladera Times** is published monthly by Scholze Communications, 29851 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694, and 12,500 copies are delivered to every home, business, corporate offices, and apartment complex in Ladera Ranch and now the new community of Rancho Mission Viejo the Thursday on or about the first of every month.

- Jim Schmitt Editor & Publisher
- KC Mitchell Advertising Director
- Amy Spurgeon-Hoffmann Reporter/Photojournalist
Ladera Ranch and Rancho Mission Viejo
- Ram Mukherji Education Editor
- Cathie Berlin Real Estate Editor
- Chuck Gibson Feature Writer
- Michelle Patterson Business Columnist
- Ashley Perkins Reporter
- Phone: (949) 481-3593
- Fax (949) 481-3594
- Email: LaderaTimes@cox.net
- Website: www.LaderaTimes.com

Editorial & Production Advisors:

June Rodgers, Chairman/CEO, Thelma E. June Rodgers, LLC, Laguna Niguel
Kathy L. Scholze, Chairman/CEO Scholze Communications, Ladera Ranch

Calendar of Events

Dates, times, locations, and events are subject to change without notice so double check before setting out to attend an event. Events can be added to the Calendar by emailing details to LaderaTimes@cox.net. For a more extensive list of events, go to www.LaderaTimes.com.

Tuesday, January 22 – FREE Teen Self Defense Workshop from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Oak Knoll Village Clubhouse on O'Neill Drive and Chantilly Lane. Attendees will learn how to use verbal boundary-setting and de-escalation techniques, how to avoid being an "easy target," and how to assess when a physical response to

aggression is required. Maximum of 25 teens, grades 7-12. Advance RSVP required: events@laderalife.com.

Wednesday, February 11 – LARMAC Executive & Open Session Meeting, Avendale Clubhouse on Daisy, beginning at 5:00 pm.

Saturday, February 21 – Ladera

Ranch Little League Opening Day from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Founder's Park at the corner of Avendale Boulevard and Daisy. Entertainment and food vendors are wanted.



Those interested are asked to contact Courtney Lima at 949-545-1066

Wednesday, April 15 – LARMAC Executive & Open Session Meeting, Avendale Clubhouse on Daisy, beginning at 5:00 pm.



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Ladera Joy Luck Club, A Chinese Cultural Group, Celebrated Holiday Season with A Fusion Of Eastern and Western Styles

By: Pearleen Wang, Ladera Ranch Middle School 8th Grader

Established in 2007, the Joy Luck Club of Ladera Ranch helps many first generation Chinese-Americans adapt to western society.

By combining Chinese customs with western practices, Joy Luck Club effectively allows Chinese-Americans to stay true to their roots while experiencing American culture.

On December 13, the club's annual Winter Party, attended by over 90 people of all ages, once again successfully fused western and eastern traditions.

The efforts of the younger generation were widely used in the planning



of this event.

Including the second

generation Chinese-Americans gives them a chance to learn the ancient eastern customs they do not experience in the western world.

During the music program, astonishing performances of the ErHu and Souna, both customary Chinese instruments, were followed by the swing of modern pop songs and passion of classical masterpieces.



A special guest also appeared that night and, much to the children's delight, Santa Claus arrived in a flying red Toyota to direct games and pass out gifts!

The joy of holiday spirit reached every person as they celebrated the season among friends and family.

While preserving ancient eastern customs, the Joy Luck Club will simultaneously continue helping first generation Chinese-Americans adjust to the western way of life.



Stage Depot Wins \$18,075 in Gov. Contracts Thanks to US Federal Contractor Registration

The Stage Depot, of Ladera Ranch, has won three government contracts for a total of \$18,075, thanks to the Federal Simplified Acquisition Program and the guidance of Peter Lanore.

The Stage Depot has been a Verified Vendor with US Federal Contractor Registration since January 2014 and immediately began working with Acquisition Specialist Peter Lanore to find a government market-

ing campaign that would fit its business model and build brand awareness in the federal sector.

Shortly after being put through the US Federal Contractor Registration qualification process, it was decided that enrolling into the Simplified Acquisition Program would be the best marketing decision for their business.

The Simplified Acquisition Program provides a business with a federal

registration, federal small business database profiles, lists of government buyers and prime vendors, a government-formatted website, and a customized government business plan.

The Stage Depot worked with Peter to create a customized marketing strategy that will be used when reaching out to government buyers. Strategies such as developing an elevator pitch and learning how to write a government bid proposal

are two key components in government contracting.

Some of the agencies that have awarded The Stage Depot government contracts from the outreach of the Simplified Acquisition Program include: the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and the Department of the Navy.

The Stage Depot is America's portable staging authority, helping businesses choose the right stage system for each event based on the client's needs and budget.

Its staging experts are there to educate business owners about the best stage choices available. Every stage will service and fit different functions.

The Stage Depot carries all the major brands of staging. Whether a business is looking for a portable stage, mobile stage with wheels, a modular stage, an aluminum stage, a height-adjustable stage, or an outdoor stage, The Stage Depot will have it in stock.

It also carries all the accessories a business could possibly need for a stage such as stage guardrails, stage ramps, stage skirts, stage steps, backdrops, Truss and Roof systems, and transportation/storage systems. The Stage Depot also has years of experience assisting schools, government organizations, and the military

Ladera Ranch Management Consulting Firm Opens Permanent Presence in New Delhi

DestinHaus LLC, a global management consulting company headquartered in Ladera Ranch has announced the opening of an office in New Delhi, India, to enhance its presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

With its corporate headquarters in Ladera Ranch and regional presence in Japan and India, DestinHaus is further expanding its global reach.

This new office will further augment DestinHaus' services for its International clients as they expand into India and other emerging countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal. This expansion will also provide support for Indian companies that want to expand to markets in the US, Europe and

Asia. In announcing the expansion, DestinHaus CEO Murlinathan said "The opening of the DestinHaus office in India is timely as the Indian economy is opening outward under Prime Minister Modi's new economic policies.

"A number of our clients are keen on investing in India and are looking to us to develop and implement their growth strategies in that region."

As the economy grows, India companies are looking to expand into international markets.

DestinHaus Chief Operating Officer Hema Nathan adds that, "With our understanding of global markets and international client base, DestinHaus can guide Indian compa-

nies through the expansion process, particularly in the area of mergers and acquisitions."

The New Delhi office will be managed by Raunak Mahajan who has taken over as General Manager for DestinHaus in India.

Mr. Raunak is an experienced leader with a successful track record in international business growth, company turnarounds and business startups.

The new office is located at 1550, 15th Floor Eros Corporate Towers, Nehru Place, New Delhi 110019, India. Tel: +91-965-4516932. Media Contact is Christopher Lynch, DestinHaus, LLC, (949) 388-0330. Email him at: christopher.lynch@destinhaus.com.

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There are many different types of companion birds, and there are specific rules for the nutritional well-being of each species.

The following list is a basic guideline, according to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (ASPCA). For specific feeding recommendations, please consult your avian veterinarian.

1. Pellets for the Palate Although seed has been the traditional staple of a bird's diet, these days most experts recommend a high-quality pelleted food that's formulated for your bird's species. Seed mixes provide variety, but they do not always provide optimum nutrition.

If you want to feed seeds, offer them only in small quantities as treats.

2. Mix it Up. Pellets and seeds should not be the only foods your bird eats. Birds love variety, and enjoy searching to obtain food, just as they would in the wild. Otherwise, they can become bored and develop bad habits, such as overeating, feather picking and tearing up their surroundings.

"Fun" foods such as corn on the cob, leafy greens, broccoli, and oranges can provide distraction and entertainment for your bird.

Because birds have to "work" to get these foods –

i.e. pull kernels off the cob and tear bites off of greens, broccoli and oranges – they stay occupied longer than when feeding on ready-to-eat foods.

For added variety, play with the placement of these treats. Hang food from the top or sides of the cage, weave through bars, or stuff pieces of food into toys.

3. In Living Color. Fruits and vegetables should be given twice daily. Appropriate fruits and vegetables for your bird include: corn, carrots, potatoes, squash, dark green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cooked sweet potatoes, melons, apples, oranges, berries, bananas, pears and peaches.

It is safe to use a powdered fruit preservative, such as "Fruit Fresh" so that you can put this produce in the refrigerator for storage without food spoilage.

Different types of birds require different amounts of food. Your veterinarian will be able to give you specific feeding recommendations based on the type of bird you have and your bird's individual characteristics.

4. Their (Twice) Daily Bread. Breads and cereals should be given twice a day. Appropriate breads and cereals include the following: whole grain breads, unsweetened breakfast cereals, unsweetened granola, tortillas and pasta.

Ask your vet about specific feeding recommendations based on the type of bird you have and your bird's individual characteristics.

5. Hi, Protein! Protein should be given twice daily. Appropriate sources of protein include: cooked lean meats, tofu, low-fat cottage cheese, other firm light-colored cheeses, yogurt and cooked eggs.

Yogurt may contain friendly bacteria like acidophilus, which can help keep the ratio of good and bad bacteria in check. Be sure to read the label to make sure it contains live cultures and is low in fat.

6. Isn't That Special? Birds such as lorries and lorikeets require specialized diets that are sugary liquids made from fresh fruit or formulated compounds. Soft-billed birds may require mealworms, blossoms and

leaves, diced fruit and nectar. Please note, these diets attract insects, and the feces of these birds are very messy.

7. Water. Fresh, cold water should be available to your bird at all times. Change it at least once a day, preferably twice, and clean the water bowls at least daily.

Vitamin and mineral supplementation is not necessary unless recommended by your veterinarian.

8. Freshen Up. Food that can spoil, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, should be left in the cage for no longer than 30-45 minutes at a time.

9. Weighty Matters.



Like other companion pets, birds may become overweight. It's a good idea to monitor your bird's weight closely. Obesity can lead to health problems, including fatty liver disease and pancreas problems.

In addition to weighing your bird, you can perform the following checks to determine if he or she is overweight:

■ Looking at your bird

from the front, you should see a bone running down his midline (the keel). There should be a rounded muscle to either side of the bone.

■ If your bird is too fat, bone won't be the most prominent part of his chest.

■ If your bird is too thin, he or she will feel bony to the side of the keel; alongside the keel will feel concave (curved in).

You can also check the non-feathered areas alongside the neck and at the base of the jaw:

■ You should be able to see the jugular vein.

■ If you cannot see the vein, it is likely that your

bird is overweight. Please note, if your bird is either under- or overweight, a diet change may be necessary. Ask your vet or breeder about the correct way to gradually make this change.

10. It's Only Natural. In the wild, birds eat about a half hour after sunrise and again at 5:00 to 6:00 pm. Sticking close to these feeding times will be most natural for your companion bird. Larger breeds should have vegetables or fruits throughout the day for snacking and entertainment.

Smaller breeds can typically have seed/pellets left in the cage throughout the day. They need to eat more frequently due to their higher metabolic rate and energy needs.

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